648, 665, 642, 433 Albania EGl

[For the economic and political position of Albania under Soviet control since the death of Stalin, see 85: Zinner, Rl Soviet Union, Category 116, Pp. 157B-163B.]

113, 439, 648 Albania EGl

[For a discussion of the nature, scope and probable future trends (up to 1970) of Soviet economic relations with the East European satellites since World War II, and the degree of inter-satellite economic integration, see 60: Bergson, Rl Soviet Union, category 116, pp. 321-355]

619 2. *Hoti.*—A tribe situated south of Gruda and extending to the
[423 lake of Scutari. It owned also large winter pastures on the plains by
648] the Boyana, and, as do the other Maltsia e Madhe tribes, descended yearly with great flocks. But in 1913, when both Hoti and Gruda were given by the Powers to Montenegro, the frontier line deprived them of their winter pasture. The gentlemen sent to draw frontiers had their heads full only of "strategy," and would not see that they were condemning a people to die of hunger. Both Gruda and Hoti have been thus ruined.

[779 When I knew the tribe it was all Catholic but three houses—those
614] of the bairaktar, which became Moslem seven generations before, after winning great honour from the Turks in a fight against Dulcigno.
173 Marash Hutzi, the hereditary surgeon of the tribe, a singularly charming
614 and intelligent old man, told me that the ancestor of Hoti, Geg Laz, came from Bosnia, and arrived with all his family shortly after the building of the church of Gruda. On arriving they found people, "Anas," living on the land and settled among them. From these "Anas" twelve houses of Hoti trace descent, and are intermarriageable with
[167] the descendants of Geg Laz. From what part of Bosnia they came he could not tell. Geg was head of a large family group of herdsmen which trekked southward, doubtless to escape serfdom under a Moslem overlord. Geg Laz had three brothers: Piper Laz, Vaso Laz, and Krasni Laz. Piper and Vaso, as we shall see, were ancestors of the Piperi and Vasojevitch tribes, which became Montenegrin in the eighteenth
197 century. Krasni was ancestor of the Moslem Albanian tribe Krasnichi. Thus of the four, two are now Serbophone and Orthodox; one Catholic and Albanophone, and the other Moslem and Albanophone.

619 Hoti, when I knew it, was the leader tribe of Maltsia e Madhe, and
721 had earned this right by valour in war. Hoti's energy in 1878 thwarted the decree of the Berlin Congress and saved Tuzhi and the Plava-Gusinje districts from Montenegro. My poor old friend, Marash Hutzi, told how he, as a young man, had rushed round and summoned Hoti to the rescue, and put such a force on the frontier that Montenegro dared not risk occupying the districts.

613 Geg Laz had four sons, each of whom became head of a group ("vlaznii"). Marash gave his pedigree as in the table on the page opposite.

In few other lands in Europe can a man give the names of his forbears for three hundred years. Poor Marash, who was one of the best,
[669] died of pneumonia during the revolt of the tribes against Turkish rule
727 in 1911. His house and all he owned was burnt. I met him in an exhausted state among the refugees. He smiled and pulled from his breast the two picture postcards I had sent him from London, the only things he had saved from the wreck. I helped him, and he begged

Seltzi—three hundred houses, all Catholic—is at the head of the Tsem 103
valley, a lovely spot. It is divided into Djenovich Seltzi, which forms 779
the majority and traces descent from the reputed ancestor Kilmeni, 596
and the Rabijenovich Seltzi, which is of another stock, and some say 614
is related to a tribe near Rijeka in Montenegro (? Tzrmnitza).

Vukli lies at the other source of the Tsem and consisted of ninety-four families, all Catholic.

Boga is at the head of the Proni Thaat, above Skreli. Seventy-five [582]
families, all Catholic. Boga intermarries much with Thethi. Nikshi,
one hundred and fifty-four houses, almost all Moslem, lies between
Boga and Vukli. All these people winter on the plains near Scutari to
feed their flocks. They, too, have suffered much from the new frontier, [221
which was purposely drawn by the Montenegrins so as to cut the road 648]
and make their journeys to the plain and town very difficult. Montenegro and the Serbs hoped thus to force Klimenti to fall into their hands, and the authorities sent by the Powers to delimit frontiers were too ignorant of the manner of life of the people to see into the matter. So-called "strategical" frontiers, drawn heedless of economic needs, are more likely to promote war than to prevent it.

6. *Loke*, or Lohja, a small tribe of one bairak, consisting of eighty 619
Moslem and forty Catholic houses. Of mixed descent from Shlaku 614
and Pulati. Probably families flowed down into this more fertile district 779
not far from the lake when Serb rule broke up, for "Loho" and its [174
mills are mentioned in 1348 by Stefan Dushan among the districts 794]
which are given to the Church.

7. *Rechi*, a small Moslem tribe, gives same tale of origin as Lohja; 619
and has also a few houses of "Anas." 596

8. *Rioli*, on the river, obviously takes its name from *rivulus*,
another memento of Roman days. It is all Catholic. The cloth-fulling [779
mills still clack on the river, and perhaps stand in the same place as 294]
some of those given away by Dushan. Like Rechi-Lohja, it is of mixed 648
descent. These eight tribes form the Maltsia e Madhe group.

There are also on the shores of the lake two small Moslem tribes, 619
Kopliku and Grizha. Kopliku as "Kopelnik" is also one of the places 779
mentioned in Tsar Dushan's list. Between Kopliku and Scutari is the 103
only Serb village of the whole district, Vraka, which derives its name [776]
from the Saints Vrachi: The Healers, SS. Cosmo and Damian, to whom
the church was dedicated. Vraka had a thousand inhabitants, who all
trace descent from various Bosnians, Herzegovinese, and Montenegrins, [628
who in recent times fled from blood-vengeance and sheltered in 166]
Turkish territory. Far from being grateful for shelter they are a
perpetual source of trouble. They are used by the Serbs as a "jumping- 648
off ground" for complaints, and though they have their own Church 779

648 779 and priests, which have not been interfered with, the Jugoslav Government has tried to plant a Serb bishop in Scutari on their behalf. They should be exchanged for some Albanians in Serb territory. The whole of the Maltsia e Madhe district is included in the diocese of Scutari.

There is a sprinkling of Serb place-names in the district, but most of them are Albanized, showing how, on the retreat of Serb rule, the older race reasserted itself.

3. The Pulati Group

175 794 Polati, Pilot, Pulati occurs as the name of a large mountain district and as a bishopric at an early date.[1] In 877 a bishop of Polati is mentioned by the Council of Delmitano. Then Pope Alexander II, in a letter written to the Archbishop of Antivari in 1062, puts Pulati and its bishop under his care. Towards the end of that century Antivari, owing doubtless to the growing power of the Serbs, ceased to be an archbishopric, though it was still a bishopric, and Pulati is mentioned by Callixtus II in 1121 as under the Archbishop of Ragusa. In 1251 the Archbishopric of Antivari was restored, and Pulati again mentioned as under Antivari. Between 1372 and 1421 is a gap in which Farlati tells us that Helena, widow of Stefan Dushan, and her son, Urosh, "vexed most bitterly the Catholics, and spoiled them of their goods, and reduced them to extreme poverty." No bishop is then mentioned. The Church was kept alive by the Franciscans, who faced danger and hardship in the mountains. Again, under the Turks, extreme misery is mentioned, and bishops are intermittent. It was reported that here were then still some twenty thousand Catholics. But, in spite of missionary effort, the Church almost lapsed. In 1653 Marcus Crisius traversed Pulati and reported: "It is incredible how ignorant the people now are of religion." Up till 1520 there were two bishoprics, Pulatenses Majores, and Pulatenses Minores. To Pulati Minor bishops were appointed from 1345 to 1520; then the two dioceses were united. It appears that it was hard to find men to accept the post, and some of those who did, broke down under the difficulties. Thus Bishop Serafinus, who learnt Albanian and worked very hard, had to retire through illness. Even though the Church of St. Nikola, at Ghoanni, "was rebuilt in 1703 more elegantly and larger and is called a cathedral," it was a humble enough edifice.

In *Illyricum Sacrum* (1817) a contemporary account mentions that Pulati is in the deepest recesses of the roughest mountains; that it

---

[1] *Acta et Diplomata Res Albaniæ Illustrantia*, and Farlati.

619 614

Mirdita. Since adopting Islam it has married into the two other Moslem 779
tribes of the group, Matija and Dibra. 582

2. *Matija* is wholly Moslem. It had a very bad reputation when I [186
was travelling in Albania, and was so much averse to foreigners that 609]
I did not visit it. It was about the only tribe that refused to accept
blood-gelt and insisted on blood, and the more civilized tribes of [628]
Maltsia e Madhe used to say: "We are not so bad as Matija." It was notorious for constant cattle-stealing from the herds wintering on the plains and was said to consist of about twelve hundred houses. It has
since come before the public, as its chief, Ahmed Zogu, with a large [669
number of armed men at his back, aspired to rule Albania. He was 648]
expelled by the Albanians in 1924, but was returned forcibly to the country by the support of Belgrade, and it is said of other Powers, who saw in him a ready tool to assist their schemes. By first giving territory to the Serbs and then great concessions to Italy he has now put Albania into a difficulty, and she has become a bone of contention between Jugoslavia and Italy. In 1908, when all the tribes were eager for an independent Albania, no one could have foreseen its destinies would be thrown into the hands of the wildest and least educated of the tribes.

3. *Dibra.*—This tribe, too, I found unvisitable. It had as bad a reputation as Matija, but has suffered cruelly as a result of war, for the frontier has been drawn between the Dibrani and the town of Dibra, their market. This has caused great discontent both sides of the frontier, and some fighting. A frontier under no circumstances should cut a tribe land in half—if those who draw it wish to maintain peace.

Dibra and Matija formed part of the Principality of Skender Beg in the old days. Luria belonged to Dukagini.

4. *Arnji.*—A small independent tribe on the left bank of the river Mola. It is all Moslem and an offshoot of Berisha. I was the only
foreigner who had passed through it for many years, and a long debate [186
was held before I was admitted as guest. The women all wore Mirdite 291]
dress, and I was told the tribe married mainly Mirdite women.

PRIZREN GROUP

1. *Ljuma.*—When I knew it, this was a large and strong Moslem 727
tribe. In 1912–13 it suffered very heavily. A Serb officer in my presence 619
described how he and his battalion had bayoneted all the women and children in part of the tribe, because "women bear men," and laughed till he choked over his beer. The Serbs were "liberating the land from the Turkish yoke." On subsequent inquiry I learnt that some 1,400 persons had been massacred. Part of this tribe is now under Serb rule.

614

district, too, is now part of Jugoslavia, and has suffered much at the 619 hands of Serb and Montenegrin. The lands are being colonized by 173 Serbs. Many Albanians have fled into Albania. [166]

2. *Gusinje.*—This, in all probability, descends from some of the last of the Bosniaks who trekked south. Though largely Serbophone, the pre-war Gusinjans were so violently anti-Serb that when the Treaty [648] of Berlin awarded them to Montenegro they resisted annexation so fiercely that the plan was dropped. Terrible vengeance was taken for this by the Montenegrins in 1913 and the Serbs in 1919. Men, women, and children were mercilessly slaughtered. Some thousands fled to [186 Scutari for protection. A British force was there then. So greatly had 727] these refugees suffered that they preferred to die of fever in the Scutari swamps to returning to Gusinje, where, as they said, the Serbs had thrown down food to attract a crowd of hungry children and had then thrown a bomb into the midst of them.

But the Powers permitted the Serbs to keep the district. The advent of the Serb has, in fact, reproduced the conditions of the Middle Ages, when the Turks advanced. I note the facts in order to enable an observer fifty or more years hence to learn how much of an original population is wiped out or absorbed by a conqueror.

3. *Plava.*—I did not visit, as it was opposed to admitting strangers. I was told by old Marash Hutzi, of Hoti, that part of Plava derived from Hoti, but that part was of very old stock called Pagani; but he did not know if Pagani were Moslems or Catholics. "Pagani," or "Paganezi," occurs as a proper name in some Durazzo and Ragusa documents of the thirteenth century. Possibly it was a usual term for "country people" among those of the coast and the towns who spoke a Latin dialect. The "Pagani" of Plava may be an "island" of an ancient population, e.g. Vlah.

To sum up briefly, the present tribes of Albania are in all probability mainly descended from the pre-Slav Balkan inhabitants. In the 619 173 Serb Empire the herdsmen were recognized as Vlah and Albanian. A very large proportion of the Albanian mountains were, as we have seen, given along with their inhabitants to Serbian monasteries. Under Turkish rule the power of the monasteries naturally dwindled rapidly, and the Albanian serfs, more especially as they were largely, if not entirely, Catholic, would as rapidly break loose from servitude.

That the refugees who came into these mountains later were also of the herdsman class there is little reason to doubt. They came with their flocks, and are to this day strictly pastoral.

As we shall see in studying the Montenegrin tribes, the ultimate 619 fate of these refugees has been largely influenced by whether they 101 settled in land which was under the Orthodox Church, or whether 779

787 During that war I again heard the bones fatally read. An Albanian friend of mine in Podgoritza, owner of the local omnibus, was a great student of bones. He spent his leisure reading them as we others do books. One day he begged me to come for something very important, for my eye and ear alone.

The windows of his little room were closely curtained to prevent spying, and in the half-darkness was a pile of bladebones. He chose one and showed me a white opaque spot on it as large as a sixpence, and gravely asked if I knew what it meant. Now an opaque spot in certain places means death. "Yes," said he, "but what a spot! Did you ever see such a large one?" I never had, nor had he. He was troubled and anxious and pondered and pondered. The position of the spot meant someone must die soon. But it was so large, it must mean a great man. "Could it mean anything less than a king?" That was what he wished to ask me.

There flashed through my brain: "Are they plotting to assassinate King Nikola?" (He was very unpopular, for the war was going badly for Montenegro.) I discreetly said: "I do not know." He decided that it must mean a king—and shortly.

Just about a fortnight afterwards King George of Greece was assassinated. It was quite impossible that the seer should have known of any plot. We had hardly any news from other fronts.

It was one of those coincidences which, in the popular mind, overwhelm a thousand previous failures and annihilate reason. My poor friend was awestruck at the revelation that had been granted him.

● 648 The last time I heard, and probably ever shall hear, the bones read was
721 at Durazzo, when the Prince zu Wied was there, in the fatal summer
of 1914. Durazzo was seething with representatives of every Power
that had a finger in the Balkan pie. France, Russia, and Serbia were
doing all they could to start a war. Italy was active. Fighting was
going on and the hospitals were full of wounded. On the quay a very
ragged mountain man insisted on speaking with "the Kralitza" as they
787 called me. He had come a long distance to consult me. He was eager
and excited. Pulling a fowl's breast-bone from his sash, he held it
against the blazing sun. The bone glowed red. The others said he was
stupid and did not know how to read the bones. But he insisted and
cried vehemently: "Gjak! gjak (blood, blood) everywhere, everywhere
nothing but blood and more blood." And about a week or two afterwards
the Great War began, and blood has not yet ceased flowing in
the Near East.

Enough examples. That very many people believe the bones is undoubtable. I have been at meals where elder men have stopped

● 648 All foreign legations, except that of Great Britain, are located in Tirana. The British Legation is in Durazzo (Durrës).

366 To an eager tourist Tirana's allure will lie in the bazaars located in the side streets away from the center of the city, where craftsmen have plied their trades for centuries. Side by side are the shops of the silver- and goldsmiths and the displays of pottery, tapestry, and the laces and skillful handwork of the Albanian women will catch the feminine eye. 363 Those who never tire of the unique and intriguing will be swept along through a maze of streets that have nothing in common with the progressive edifices in the modern section of Tirana. Through these narrow streets which offer every form of merchandise in its own interesting way, the explorer will come 342 on the outskirts of the city to the small huts of peasants made of sun-baked bricks of surprising endurance surrounded by the usual fence or wall, and here one touches a life that is different—prompted by traditions and cultures that have come down from person to person, perhaps from the days when modern progress was not even a dream.

346 Among the numerous other sights not to be missed in Tirana are the Mosque of Suleiman

652 Albania's national budget for the year 1936-37 is as follows:

Income	18,584,042 gold Francs
Expense	18,879,427 gold Francs
Deficit	295,385 gold Francs

Albania has contracted two loans, namely: A loan of 50,000,000 gold Francs, redeemable
653 in forty years. This loan was made by the Society for the Economic Development of Albania (SVEA), in 1927, to be used exclusively for the purpose of developing the projects of public works, such as constructing bridges, building roads, the improvement of the port of Durazzo (Durrës) and for furthering agricultural development. As security for this loan the incomes on salt, matches, cigarette paper and playing cards were pledged.

648 The second loan of 100,000,000 gold Francs
652 was agreed upon in 1931 by the Italian Government, the whole sum of which was to be liquidated by annual installments of not over 10,000,000 gold Francs, to be used to balance the budget as long as the investments, presently in course, will have beneficially assisted in giving economic stability to the nation, so that the necessary expenses may be taken care of by Albania's own resources, and a part of

such annual installment also to be applied to- 648
wards further development of public works, 652
agriculture and for the furtherance of education.

In 1936, Italy and Albania agreed upon several new agreements, conventions and treaties, one of which covers the liquidation of the aforesaid two loans and provides for other loans to be used by the Albanian Government for the further economic development and welfare of the Kingdom of Albania.

The following eight Agreements were duly ratified by Italy and Albania and ratification documents were exchanged on May 30, 1936:

(1) A Protocole, signed January 28, 1936, as supplementary to the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of January 20, 1924;

(2) An Agreement, signed March 19, 1936, liquidating the loan of 100,000,000 gold Francs of June 26, 1931;

(3) An Agreement, signed March 19, 1936, with the aim of systemizing the financial situation of Albania;

(4) An Agreement, signed March 19, 1936, for a loan of 10,000,000 gold Francs for agricultural development;

(5) An Agreement, signed March 19,

● 648 1936, for a loan, creating a monopoly on
652 tobacco in Albania as security for such loan;

(6) A Convention, signed March 19, 1936, for the further development of the port of Durazzo (Durrës);

(7) A Convention, signed March 19, 1936, relating to veterinarian research and sanitation measures;

(8) A Provisional Agreement of Commerce, signed March 19, 1936.

Foreign Representation

● 648 THE Kingdom of Albania has concluded treaties of amity, arbitration, commerce, extradition, navigation and consular conventions with numerous foreign countries.

Albania is a member of the League of Nations since December 17, 1920, and also a member of the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague.

Albania is one of the signatories to the Universal Postal Union Convention, signed at Cairo, March 20, 1934.

Albania, on May 6, 1935, acceded to the International Telecommunication Convention and the Radiocommunication Regulations Annexed thereto of Madrid, of December 9, 1932.

It is the earnest wish of King Zog I and the Albanian Government, according to a statement made personally by the king to the author, to continue in amity and peace with all nations alike.

Albania maintains diplomatic and consular relations with practically all foreign nations, having legations in Ankara, Athens, Belgrade, Cairo, London, Paris, Rome, Sofia, Washington, and in other capitals, and consulates-general or consulates in various cities of Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Dominion of Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United States of America, Yugoslavia, and so forth. Albania has also appointed permanent press representatives—Chiefs of Press Service of the Albanian Government and/or Press Attachés to Austria, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dominion of Canada, France, Great Britain, Haiti, India, Irish Free State, Mexico, United States of America and in other countries.

A permanent delegate to the League of Nations resides in Geneva, Switzerland.

Austria, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iran (Persia), Italy, Latvia, Rumania, Russia, Turkey, the United States of America, Yugoslavia and other countries have legations in Albania, while numerous other nations maintain consulates-general or consulates in Tirana and other cities of Albania.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

freedom of Turkey, they are thought to be 000 Turks. And—this is of greater importance—when the Albanians rose to fight for the freedom of Albania, they fought behind a curtain of impenetrable silence.

They were surrounded by a battle line. The 648 Slavs were north and east; the Greeks were south; the Italians were west. Albania was cut off from the outside world in 1910; for thirteen years she has been cut off from the world. No telegraph or telephone lines ran from Albania to Europe; no mail got through without censorship, no traveler without passport visé from enemies. Letters for Europe must still go by messenger through Jugo-Slavia, or by Italian steamer to Italian ports. During May and June, 1922, while I was in Tirana, Albania's communication with Europe was completely closed by the Italians, in retaliation for Albania's protest against the establishing of Italian post offices in Albanian cities.

Behind this veil of silence, the truth about 000 Albania lies hidden. Only one newspaper correspondent, to my knowledge, has visited Albania in recent years—Mr. Maurer of the Chicago *Post*. Mr. Kenneth Roberts of the *Saturday Evening Post* lay for ten days ill in Tirana, left with all haste for Montenegro, and later wrote of Albania—entertainingly. News of Albania bears the date lines of Belgrade, Rome, Athens. Since 1910 it has been as accurate as news of France bearing a Berlin date line. This is only

175 The outbreak of the first World War shattered the precarious equilibrium on which the infant state of Albania had reposed. The armies of Serbia, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and France occupied parts of the country, sometimes in accordance with the dictates of military necessity, but not least with a view to staking out their claims against the day of settlement. The victory left Great Britain and France supreme in the Levant and in the Balkans, and Albania was accordingly restored to her independence within the frontiers of 1913.

648 The Empires of Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey lay prostrate or dismembered, and Albania now became the object of fierce rivalry between Italy and the new Adriatic power of Yugoslavia. Both states naturally strove to control the Straits of Otranto; Italy prevailed, and, in 1926, by the Pact of Tirana, acquired a virtual protectorate over Albania. The Duce might for a time rest content with Italian supremacy in the Adriatic; but, as one step leads to another, so the mastery of this route to the Levant led him to turn his eyes to the Levant itself. He revolved ambitious plans for its conquest by sea and land, and designed that Albania should serve him, not only as the key to the Adriatic, but also as the bridgehead of a new Roman Empire in the Balkans. Accordingly, in April 1939, when diplomacy had failed to compel Albania's subservience, he occupied the country and began to build a network of roads along which Italian armies might march to the East in the footsteps of the Legions.

000 Each of these episodes from Albania's past is but a variation on the underlying theme of the struggle of the Powers to control, or at least deny to their rivals, the key to the Adriatic road to the East. The recent war, accompanied by the return of Germany and Russia to the ranks of the rivals for the dominion of the Levant, gave a new impetus to this struggle. At times it was submerged in the broader conflict which engulfed the world; yet ever and again it reasserted itself, developing a momentum of its own, regardless of alliances or enmities: for if war is an extension of politics, both are projections of geography.

In this struggle for the control of Albania the Albanian

Their supporters rose in revolt; the government forces were 643
defeated; and a fortnight later Zog occupied Tirana. Fan 669
Noli escaped to Italy and later emigrated to the United States; Ali Klissura settled in Paris; and Mustafa Kruya went to Italy, where he became the goad with which in later years the Italians threatened Zog. These three were condemned to death *in contumaciam*; but most of the Tosk leaders were seemingly reconciled to the new regime.

It was widely expected that Zog would rule as the instru- 643
ment of the Yugoslavs to whom he owed the success of his 648
revolution;[1] and indeed the powerful influence of Tsena, who was his brother-in-law as well as his Minister of Interior, was exercised in favour of friendship with Belgrade. The policy of a country, however, is more often the effect of its circumstances than their cause. The Yugoslavs had brought the new regime to power, but they were in no position to supply it with the financial and technical assistance without which it could scarcely be maintained. Of necessity, therefore, Zog inclined increasingly towards the Italians, who were quick to seize any opportunity of re-establishing their influence in Albania. Tsena Kryeziu, however, resolutely opposed a pro-Italian policy. He was first and foremost a Kossovar; and his whole purpose in supporting the revolt had been to restore good relations with Belgrade and so reduce the effects of the frontier barrier which separated his people from their fellow Albanians. His efforts, however, were doomed to failure by the inability of the Yugoslavs to compete against the financial support which the Italians offered to Zog. His influence swiftly declined; and, after the signing of the Pact of Tirana, Zog appointed him Albanian Minister in Belgrade, to remove him from the centre of affairs. It is possible that Tsena there conspired with the Yugoslavs to repeat against Zog the same revolutionary tactics as he had carried out with him against Fan Noli. Be this as it may, in October 1927 he was shot dead in a café in Prague by an Albanian student. The responsibility for the crime was commonly ascribed to Zog; and, though his complicity was never established, Tsena's brothers, Gani, Hassan, and Said, judged it prudent to emigrate to Yugoslavia.

[1] [Cf. category 669, pp. 17-19 for data on 1924 revolution — Analyst]

643 Within a year of Tsena's murder Zog cemented his personal position by the assumption of the crown and style of King of the Albanians. The republican sympathies of the Tosk *beys* were disarmed by their mutual jealousies; and the new regime was established among the Ghegs by the efforts of a quadrumvirate of chiefs. These were Muharrem Bairaktar, Fikri Dine, Jemal Herri, and Prenk Previsi, who had all followed Zog into exile in Yugoslavia and had played an important part in the subsequent revolution. In the discharge of their duties they acquired considerable influence, but when they had served the royal purpose Zog broke their power, which might one day have challenged his own. In their place he installed new men, who proved more obedient to his wishes as they were more dependent upon his favour. Thus, in a period of five years, the royal dictatorship was made absolute.

648
315 Meanwhile Italian influence grew in Albania until the country's foreign relations and economic development came to be largely under Italian direction. Such a trend was indeed almost as inevitable in the economic as in the diplomatic sphere, for Albania possesses few natural resources which might have attracted the attention of other Powers. At one time, however, it appeared that the Albanian oil deposits might become of international interest; and an instructive tale is told of their emergence on the diplomatic scene. At one of the many international conferences which followed the last war, Albania was represented by Faik Bey Konitza, a man of considerable wit and distinction. Faik Bey was anxious to secure British support for his country's claims, and, after several unsuccessful applications, was reluctantly granted an interview by Lord Curzon. Curzon received Faik standing, and coldly invited him to be brief. The Albanian delegate bowed and replied:

"Your Excellency, in Albania there is oil."

Curzon's eyes lit up: "Sit down, my dear fellow," he said, suddenly unbending; and to the astonishment of the impatient secretaries their discussion was prolonged beyond the hour. Nor will the reader be surprised to learn that at the plenary session, next morning, the rights of a small nation were generously vindicated by the majestic eloquence of the British Foreign

Secretary. *Si non è vero è ben trovato*, for a concession was 648
in fact granted to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. For a 315
variety of reasons, however, by no means exclusively commercial, the development of the oil-field was left to the Italians.

Italian influence in Albania was strong, but the King brooked 643
little interference in the internal administration of the country. 648
He drove hard bargains for every concession, insisted on retaining a British mission to train the gendarmerie, and gained from the Italians far more than he ever gave them. So long as Italy's ambitions were limited to assuring her predominance in the Adriatic such a situation was not unsatisfactory, for then her chief concern was to prevent other Powers extending their influence to Albania rather than to control the country herself. But when Mussolini decided that Albania should become the bridgehead from which his forces would march to the East, he was forced to recognise that Zog was of too independent a temper to serve this grand design. In April 1939, therefore, he decreed the invasion and annexation of Albania. The Italian landing at Durazzo was gallantly contested by the commandant of **Kruya**, a certain Abas Kupi. Otherwise there was no resistance. The King declined the unequal encounter and crossed into Greece with Queen Geraldine and their new-born son. From Greece he came by devious routes to Paris, and, after the fall of France, settled in London. The most loyal, or anti-Italian, of his subjects followed him into exile, and, for the most part, found hospitality in Yugoslavia or Turkey. Meanwhile, under the general amnesty proclaimed by the Italians, his chief opponents, including Ali Klissura and Mustafa Kruya, returned to Albania. An Italian Viceroy was installed in Tirana, the friends of Italy were rewarded, and a puppet government was set up on the bayonets of the invaders.

Zog had found Albania in chaos; he left her with at least 643
the rudiments of a modern state. Roads had been built; the framework of an administration created; and order, if not law, enforced. The King governed, indeed, in the oriental tradition, but it was also the tradition of his people. He corrupted his enemies, or played them off one against the other, and adminis-

tunes of the battle intently, but, with the fall of France — the protectress of the Little Entente and the ally of the Salonika Front — a great fear swept over them, and many forsook the common cause. It is to the everlasting credit of the Albanian leaders that in this darkest hour they scornfully rejected the fair proposals of the Italian Government. Others might turn back but they stood firm beside us, manfully resolved to free their country with our help or to die in the attempt. 000

Italy was now in the war; and, as the summer advanced, 669* we could no longer doubt that our enemies intended to sub- 648 jugate the Balkans. We[1] were therefore instructed to prepare plans for neutralising Albania as a base for Italian attacks against Yugoslavia or Greece. Albania itself contained few technical installations or other nerve-centres whose sabotage would seriously hinder the enemy; but Italian armies advancing thence into the Balkans must depend for their communications on the Albanian roads. These ran through some of the most rugged country in Europe, and beside them lived a race of men who looked on guerilla warfare as their natural calling. We therefore decided to work upon the Albanians so that, when the time came, they would rise in revolt and close the mountain roads against the Italian armies.

A first step was to form an Albanian revolutionary movement which would include as many enemies of Italy as we might persuade to work together. It was still too early to launch such a movement inside Albania, for the Albanians were not yet ready to receive its leaders, nor able to protect their operations. Instead we thought it wiser, as Zog and Tsena had done in 1924, to build up the necessary organisation in Yugoslavia. There we might lay our plans undisturbed, equip a striking force of Kossovars, and accumulate war material while our agents prepared the ground across the border. The revolt might thus be securely mounted on neutral soil and carried into Albania when the Balkan campaign began.

The Kossovo seemed to be the natural starting-point for the revolt, being an extension of Albania within the political frontiers of Yugoslavia. Many of its inhabitants were united

[1] [Cf. cat 116, pp 25-28, for information on British intelligence organization to which author belonged -- Analyst]

*669
648 by family ties to the tribesmen across the border and were thus exceptionally placed to smuggle arms, agents, or propaganda into Albania. Moreover, a force of Kossovars acting as the spearhead of the rising would not be resisted as an invasion but fraternally acclaimed as a liberating army. The support of the Kossovars were thus essential to our plans, but most of their leaders inclined towards the Axis Powers, who had promised to unite the region to Albania. Gani alone supported the Allies, so that the Kryeziu family became the natural rallying point for our movement. Indeed, long before we had come on to the scene, Gani had taken steps to organise those Albanians who had taken refuge in Yugoslavia in 1939 from the Italians. In response to Italian pressure, most of them had been confined to remote villages of Bosnia and Voivodina, but Gani provided for their needs and interceded in Belgrade on their behalf. The majority of these exiles were army officers and monarchists, and, although they were glad of Gani's help and money, they were naturally suspicious of the Kryezius as enemies of the King. Gani therefore suggested that, to make sure of their wholehearted support, we should send to Turkey for Abas Kupi, the defender of Durazzo and the most popular of the monarchist leaders.

186
159 Abas Agha Kupi, or Bazi Sani as the tribesmen called him, could neither read nor write: indeed only with difficulty could he sign his name. Born in the nineties, he was, like Skanderbeg, a native of Kruya, where his father had been a respected member of the Bektashi community. One of his uncles had been a passionate Albanian nationalist and had fired the boy's imagination by tales of Turkish prisons and guerilla war. One day, when young Abas was but fifteen years old, nationalist insurgents seized Kruya and hoisted Skanderbeg's flag — the black eagles on the red ground — upon the castle tower. The boy went out to join them, but they told him that he was too young to fight and sent him home in tears. A few days later the town was reoccupied by "loyalist" troops under Essad Pasha, who at once gave orders to pull down the offending flag and restore the Star and Crescent. A soldier climbed on to the tower to carry out the order, but young Abas snatched up his

*669 as soon as they had driven the Italians from Albania, they would turn and rend one another. We smiled indulgently at such prophecies; not only out of scepticism but because, in the summer of 1940, the headaches of victory still seemed very remote.

Our chief concern at the time was for the leadership of the movement. Gani Kryeziu, as he himself admitted, had been too long in exile to assume the role of leader inside Albania, while Abas Kupi seemed barred from it by his illiteracy. To [643] our surprise, however, Gani suggested that King Zog was the obvious choice, both by virtue of his personal ability and because, in a country as factious as Albania, the proud chiefs would more readily gather round the man whom they had once acknowledged as king than round some self-appointed leader. Abas Kupi somewhat naturally shared this view and so indeed did Mustafa Jinishi, who explained that his friends could wait for the defeat of Italy to settle their accounts with the King. This unexpected identity of views convinced us that Zog would make the best leader for the Albanian revolt; and we urged that arrangements be made to bring him in touch with the movement in Belgrade. The Foreign Office, however, hesitated to sanction any step which might commit us to the King's cause, so that the leadership of the United Front remained undefined.

*669
● 648 The United Front was the fruit of long hours spent in patient planning in the extra-territorial security of the Legation and in conspiratorial meetings in dark corners of Belgrade. We changed these meeting-places continually, but our favourite was a deserted flat on the top story of a tall, modern building in the Kralya Milana. It was unfurnished, except for a rickety table and two benches abandoned by the owner; but through its dusty windows we could look out over the city to the Sava valley and the plain beyond. The climate of conspiracy is naturally productive of suspicions, and we used to take infinite precautions to preserve the secrecy of our meetings with the Albanian leaders. We would approach the rendezvous by devious routes; change taxis on the way; or leave our cars

outside some other door. The Italians were indeed on our trail, but it would seem that we overrated the efficiency of their agents. Some months later, when I had left Yugoslavia and was living in Constantinople, I was shown an intercepted Italian intelligence report: it stated that I had secretly returned to Belgrade, gave my spurious name and supposed address, and added that I was disguised by a beard! The weather was already turning cold and I could not help pitying the wretched O.V.R.A. agent who was detailed to watch my doubtless innocent double. But besides the O.V.R.A. we had also to dodge the Yugoslav political police; for, since the fall of France, Prince Paul's first object was to avoid anything which might provoke the anger of the Axis Powers. From time to time the Yugoslav Foreign Minister would protest against our activities among the Albanian exiles, but Sir Ronald Campbell was able to reassure him in all sincerity; for our relations with the diplomatic staff were governed by the ancient precept: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth".

The Albanian leaders were of exemplary discretion, but the same could not always be said of their followers. One afternoon I returned with Sandy Glen from lunch to find two or three hundred Albanian wood-cutters, variously armed with axes and knives, grouped outside the Legation. A few of them were in earnest consultation with John Bennett, who presently discovered what was afoot. Someone, it seemed, had told them that the British would pay them a hundred dinars apiece to wreck the Italian Legation, and, like prudent men, they had come to collect their money in advance!

Nevertheless the work made progress. Our couriers passed from the Kossovo into Albania, preaching the aims of the United Front among the tribal chiefs, and gathering political and military information. Soon we were in communication with Muharrem Bairaktar, the lord of Liuma, who promised his support. Next, as propaganda, we began to send waggon-loads of corn across the border to distribute among our potential supporters. Later, rifles and ammunition were concealed beneath the corn. Thus, bit by bit, the United Front was extended to Albania and the ground was prepared for revolt.

*669 648 Indeed by July the enrolment of supporters had outstripped our capacity to supply them from the stock of weapons locally available; and we saw that it was only by drawing on the arsenals of the Middle East that we might hope to appease their insatiable hunger for arms.

The petty arms traffic we had thus far indulged in had been made possible by the help of friendly Yugoslav officials, acting on their own initiative. We could not hope, however, to run consignments of rifles from the Middle East into Albania without the knowledge and at least the tacit approval of the Yugoslav Government. We had, indeed, counted on some measure of Yugoslav support; for the Albanian revolt had always been considered as a part of the general scheme for the defence of the Balkans against an attack by the Axis Powers. It now appeared that the Belgrade Government were too demoralised by enemy pressure to countenance our plans; and we even began to doubt whether they intended to resist the Germans at all. Accordingly some of us, myself among them, turned increasingly to the task of building up the forces of resistance in Yugoslavia. Thus four years were to go by before I was once more concerned with things Albanian.

2

In August 1940 the direction of the Belgrade branch of the [625] Albanian organisation was entrusted to Lieut.-Colonel Oakley-Hill, who had been for some years an officer in the Corps of Instructors to the Albanian gendarmerie. Hill's name, as we were to learn from personal experience, was a household word among the Ghegs, thanks to his rare command of the Albanian language and his genuine affection for the Albanians. He already knew many of the leading exiles in Belgrade and soon won their confidence by his sincerity and tireless industry on behalf of the Albanian cause. Thus, under his guidance, the work was advanced.

The Albanians had been demoralised by the fall of France, but the reports which reached Belgrade in September showed that they had rallied with the news of the Luftwaffe's defeat in the Battle of Britain; a trend that was maintained with the growing certainty that the British Government meant to fight to the end. Men's minds were therefore receptive to the idea of revolt, but without arms they could not pass from ideas to action. In default of arms, money was sent across the border to maintain the goodwill of the clans and also in the hope that, by the natural operation of the law of supply and demand, it might lead to the discovery of unknown arsenals. The return, however, was small in comparison with the outlay; and the absence of concealed supplies of weapons was presently attested by the rise in the price of rifles. Meanwhile Prince Paul's Government, strong only in its determination to appease the Axis Powers, began actively to disrupt the work of the United Front. To please the Italians they expelled Parker from Skoplje; confined Abas Kupi to Sarajevo; and forbade the Kryeziu brothers to visit their estates in the Kossovo. In the face of these restrictions Oakley-Hill had no choice but to beguile the impatience of the exiles as best he might and wait upon events. 669* 648

On 4th November 1940, to the dismay of the British, and, as it now appears, the displeasure of the Germans, the Italian armies in Albania invaded Greece. The Duce thus sought a military solution to the Balkan problem; but though Roman in its inspiration, his plan proved singularly Italian in its execution. The ragged Greek soldiery, for years the butt of journalists because of a supposed dislike of fighting in the rain, surprised and routed the vanguard of the Italians in the defiles of the Pindus. The vaunted Alpini and Bersaglieri were hurled back in disorder into Albania. The Italian *débâcle* assumed spectacular proportions; Korcha, Pogradets, Gjinocastro, Saranda, and Himara fell in turn; Valona was threatened; and for a moment it seemed that the Italians would be driven into the Adriatic. R.A.F. machines appeared in Greece; and, with rumours of a new British Expeditionary Force, British stocks rose once more throughout the Balkans. 721

The Albanians believed that their freedom was at hand. 000

*669 The Albanians believed that their freedom was at hand.

648 On the front[1] the Greek troops were everywhere acclaimed as liberators, and whole Albanian units went over to them from the Italian armies. From London King Zog offered his sword to the King of the Hellenes. In Belgrade the United Front prepared to launch a general revolt which, in subjunction to a Greek offensive, might engulf the Italian armies in irretrievable disaster. The Albanians put forward no political conditions: all that they hoped was to free their country and preserve its independence; all that they asked was that some thousands of rifles with ammunition be sent from Salonika to the United Front in Belgrade. The rifles were available, and the Yugoslav Government, suddenly emboldened by the example of the Greeks, hinted that they would turn a blind eye to their passage. The plans for the revolt were approved in London and the British Military Mission in Athens were instructed to urge them upon the Greek General Staff. The Greeks, however, alternating between extremes of confidence at the prospects of their forthcoming offensive and of discouragement at the condition of their equipment, argued that Greek troops would use the rifles better than Albanian irregulars. Some of them, moreover, cherished ambitions of annexing the region variously known as Southern Albania or Northern Epirus, and were perhaps reluctant to take any step which might make them beholden to the Albanians. The plans for revolt were therefore shelved; and the natural distress of the Albanian leaders was deepened by the Hellenising policies which the Greek administration pursued in the occupied Albanian territories. The final Greek offensive was held by the Italians, though not without great difficulty, along a line of fortified positions originally built in the time of King Zog. The line had been considerably reinforced by the Italians, but there were British military observers who believed that it might well have been carried if guerillas could have impeded its supply in the critical moments of the battle.

The Italians thus stabilised their front in Albania; and, as the spring of 1941 wore on, the situation in the Balkans steadily
000 deteriorated. The infiltration of German troops into Roumania and Bulgaria assumed the proportions of occupation; and it

[1] [In the Winter of 1940--Analyst]

soon appeared that the Germans intended to crush Greek resistance by an invasion from the north-east. 000 Surrounded on all sides by hostile armies, the weak but discerning Regent of Yugoslavia prepared to yield to German demands; but he misjudged the generous temper of the Serbian nation; and before he could hand them over to their hereditary enemies a group of determined officers borne on the tide of a whole people's wrath swept him and his defeatist entourage from power. The new Yugoslav Government understood that war with Germany was certain, but they regarded the prospect with some confidence, for their army was considered the best in the Balkans. Men still remembered that little Serbia had resisted the might of the Austrian Empire for more than two years, and the news that a British army had landed at Salonika encouraged the hope that history would repeat itself. Moreover, the Greek victories in the Pindus supported the belief that the valour of a warlike people fighting in defence of their own soil was still a match for the superior equipment of invaders.

Unlike the Greeks, the new Yugoslav Government and their 669*
military advisers set great hopes on an Albanian revolt. Sur- 648
rounded as they were to almost the full extent of their land frontiers by German and Italian armies, they were wholly dependent for their communications with the British on the railway which runs through Macedonia to Salonika. The enemy were concentrated on either side of it, in Bulgaria and Albania, and at any moment by a successful attack might cut this precious life-line and seal off Yugoslavia from the outside world. In this unenviable situation they naturally welcomed a project which might prevent an Italian eruption into Macedonia and would perhaps enable their own armies to take the offensive. To attack the Italians in Albania, indeed, appealed to the Yugoslavs especially; for, by joining hands with the Greeks and opening communications with the British through the Adriatic Sea, they might hope to prolong their resistance and would at least assure their retreat.

The Yugoslav General Staff thus gave its blessing to the aims of the United Front and, in the midst of the chaos which it had inherited, sought to give the Albanian leaders such

*669 help as it could. But in Belgrade all was confusion; for,
648 though the military revolt had stimulated the patriotism of the masses, it had finally distracted an administration already demoralised and never efficient. Precious time was lost before the Albanian exiles could be assembled from the remote villages to which they had been banished; no transport could at first be found to take them to the Kossovo; and when at last they reached Jakova they were arrested as fifth columnists by the local corps-commander. Thanks to Oakley-Hill they were speedily released, but it was only to find that Gani's tribesmen, who were to have formed the spearhead of the revolt, had been called up and drafted to the Northern front.

The Albanian leaders were still struggling to obtain facilities from a command floundering in a morass of conflicting instructions when the Germans bombed Belgrade and the invasion began. That same evening they were joined by Said Kryeziu, who had remained in the capital up to the outbreak of hostilities: with him came a special liaison officer from the General Staff who at last regularised their position with the Corps Commander, and made it possible for them to begin their work. Unprepared though they were, the Albanian leaders had seen enough of Corps Headquarters and decided not to wait for a problematical increase of strength. Accordingly, on the evening of 7th April, Gani, Said, and Hassan Kryeziu, Abas Kupi and Mustafa Jinishi crossed the border into Albania with a force of barely three hundred men. With them marched Oakley-Hill.

*669 They met with no initial resistance from the Italians and were well received by the local population. The enthusiasm of the tribesmen, however, was tempered by their doubts as to the outcome of the main struggle; and recruits were slow to come in. Nevertheless they soon mustered more than a thousand men and with these advanced westward through the mountains into the Catholic regions of Nikai and Mertur. They twice engaged and defeated strong Italian patrols, and with growing forces pushed on to a point fifteen miles north of Scutari. The Catholic tribes, however, refused to rally to them; and, since they could not attack Scutari alone, they decided to fall back

*669 homes and presently made their peace with the authorities, others were captured and interned; but the greater part remained discreetly in remote mountain villages, waiting upon events.

Thus the revolt of the United Front collapsed, its organisation was dissolved, and its leaders were dispersed and cut off from communication with their allies. To those of us who watched from outside, ignorant whether Abas Kupi or Gani Kryeziu even lived, it seemed that the whole of our work was destroyed. Yet, as the leaders were scattered, so the seed of revolt was sown, and in the fullness of time there was to be a harvest.

3

*669
648
IN the summer of 1941, when the last hopes of a Balkan front had been dispelled by the German victories in Crete, Stirling was called away to more urgent duties in connection with the Arab World. His place in Constantinople was taken by Mrs. Hasluck, but otherwise the whole organisation which had grown up to promote an Albanian revolt was dissolved. For close on two years, therefore, the responsibilities of observing the Albanian situation, keeping touch with the exiles and seeking to re-establish communications with Albania devolved upon Mrs. Hasluck alone. The triple barrier of German, Bulgarian, and Italian counter-espionage proved a formidable obstacle to her efforts; and indeed informed opinion in the "D" Organisation long despaired of Albanian resistance. Mrs. Hasluck, however, remained convinced that a revolt was preparing in Albania, and worked tirelessly to glean information from the Albanian exiles and the rare Albanians who visited Constantinople. Also — and this was perhaps her greatest service — she despatched to Cairo a continuous series of reports, memoranda, and telegrams, which saved the increasingly bureaucratic headquarters of the "D" Organisation from altogether forgetting that Albania existed.

All attempts to establish a regular courier system between

669*
648

Turkey and Albania failed, but from such scraps of information as had filtered through by the end of 1942, it seemed probable that there were guerilla bands in the Albanian mountains. Rumours reaching General Mihailovitch's headquarters lent colour to this view; but, in spite of repeated enquiries, it was not found possible to ascertain the names of the guerilla leaders, their political allegiance, or even the approximate regions in which they operated.

Meanwhile, as the converging Allied armies closed in on the Axis forces in Tunisia, the British General Staff began revolving plans for military operations in Southern Italy and the Adriatic. It was therefore decided that the time had come to send a British Mission to Albania to find out what guerilla forces were there and to report upon their circumstances.

Such a Mission was fraught with difficulties and dangers, even when compared with such other missions as had already been sent to the resistance movements of Europe. As a rule, British liaison officers infiltrated into occupied territory were carefully briefed beforehand as to the general situation which would confront them, while their physical reception was usually prearranged with the local resistance forces. The "D" Organisation, however, were wholly in the dark as to the situation in Albania, and did not even know for certain whether an Albanian resistance movement existed at all. Thus, to the sufficient dangers of an incursion into enemy territory would be added the anxieties of a journey into the unknown.

Under such conditions the success of the Mission must in the main depend upon the choice of emissaries. Now there was no one available who combined the necessary youth with first-hand knowledge of Albania; and, by a process of selection as blind as it was fortunate, the lot fell upon Bill Maclean. Maclean was of Highland stock, tall and fair-haired, disguising a toughness of steel beneath an elegant and almost lackadaisical exterior. He was a natural guerilla leader, relying only on himself and gifted with a sure eye for ground and an instinctive insight into other men's intentions. Most at ease in extremes of violent action or dream-mastered sloth, he was spurred by love of adventure rather than by ambition and delighted in all 000

000 that was extravagant and strange. He had joined the Scots Greys in 1939 and, as a subaltern in Palestine during the Arab rising, had first seen guerilla warfare from the " receiving end ". Later he had served with Wingate in the Abyssinian revolt, and there had proved his worth as a leader of irregulars. Alone with a body of Amhara he had besieged an Italian army in Gondar for four months, and in the final assault had been the first to enter the city.

With Maclean went David Smiley, an officer of the Household Cavalry who had served in Abyssinia, Syria, and the Western Desert. Of sturdier build than his companion, there was no velvet glove over Smiley's claw. He knew his own mind and spoke it on all occasions, not aggressively nor even bluntly, yet in a manner so direct that it left little room for argument and no doubt whatever as to his feelings, his views, or his intentions. Seldom given to speculation, he lived firmly in the present, enjoying the good things of life and all that was agreeable or beautiful, though as an occasional patron rather than a connoisseur or devotee. He liked his friends and disliked his enemies, but otherwise was more interested in things than in men and found a rare satisfaction in organising a camp or testing the accuracy of a new weapon. Maclean regarded action as only one of the ingredients of adventure; Smiley lived for action alone and was happiest on a dangerous reconnaissance, or on those expeditions which gratified his passion for " blowing things up ". A crack cavalry officer, a skilful saboteur, and a resourceful man, Smiley supplied the technical knowledge and the capacity for taking pains which accounted for no small part of the Mission's success.

*669 648 The two officers[1] were instructed in the art of parachuting and the use of the latest demolition devices; and, since no man could say with any accuracy what lay before them, Mrs. Hasluck gave them a short, but, it appears, intensive course in Albanian customs, psychology, and folk-lore. Then, in April 1943, they were duly fitted out with submachine-guns and bags of gold to protect their persons and promote their policies and were taken to Derna, in Cyrenaica, the operational base for the Balkans. With them also went Garry Duffy, a sabotage expert from the

[1] [Cf. category 116, pp. 49-50 --Analyst]

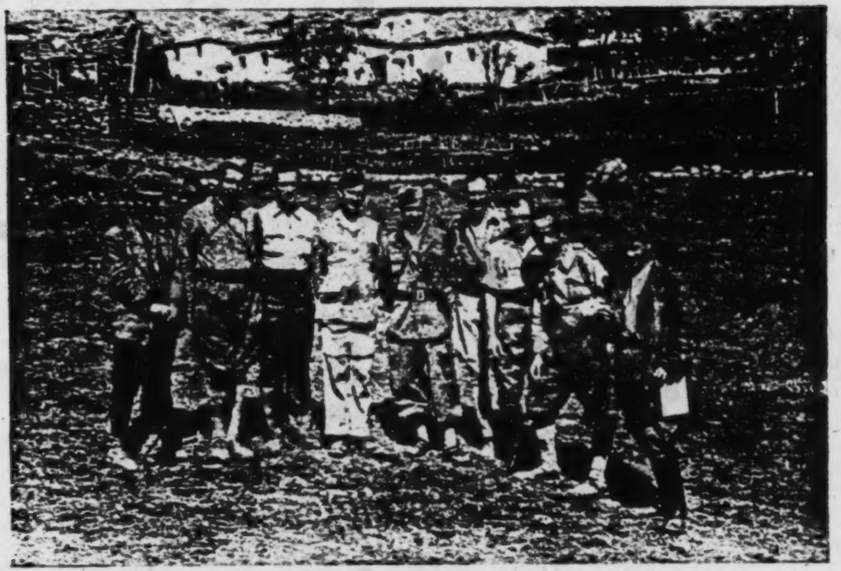
Royal Engineers, and Corporal Williamson of the Black Watch, 669*
their wireless operator. 648

From Derna they were flown to Epirus and there were dropped to one of the British Missions which were already working with the Greek resistance movement. Albania was only a few miles away, but the Greeks knew nothing of the Albanian guerillas; and Maclean and Smiley therefore walked across the border to find them for themselves. They were [609] received in the villages with elaborate courtesy and hospitality, but met with none of the pro-Allied enthusiasm which had been the rule in Greece. Despite their strikingly Nordic appearance, they were presently detained as Greek spies and stood in danger of their lives until they had satisfied their captors that they were genuine British officers. Even then an atmosphere of suspicion surrounded them; they were conscious all the time of being watched; and yet their efforts to come into touch with the guerillas were baffled at every turn. At last one night they came face to face with a representative of the "Partisans"; he brought them to the guerilla camp; and gradually they discovered the true nature of the Albanian resistance movement.

4

Two seeds of revolt had been planted in Albania: the United 669* Front, built up by British efforts and led by chiefs of proven valour; and a Communist cell, Russian instructed and composed of new men. The fortunes of war had cut them off in turn from their patrons, and for a long time they were no more than bands of wanted fugitives; a powerful ferment, but powerless of themselves. Revolutions are not made without leaders, but never by leaders alone. Some men indeed are always ready to risk their lives for their ideals, but the mass of a people will not defy their rulers unless the hopes of happiness which they set upon revolt are sharply stimulated by the goad of their present discontents. Now the Albanians experienced no violent crises of an economic or social nature such as nourished, and in large measure underlay, the resistance movements of Greece

*669
648



BRITISH MISSION AND PARTISAN LEADERS, SUMMER 1943

(*Left to Right*) Behar Shtylla, Enver Hoja, Duffy, Smiley, Spiro Moisi (Military Chief of Staff), Maclean, Hands, Ramadan Bacha, Dali Ndreu

*669

PARTISANS OF THE FIRST BRIGADE ON THE MARCH, SUMMER 1943

[-52b-]

*669
665
tional opposition to the Italians, accepting the accomplished fact of Italian rule, but continuing to demand the return of Albanian independence. For ideological reasons they inclined towards the Western Democracies, but their enthusiasm for the Allied cause was severely restrained, both by hatred of Communism and by fears that an Allied victory might once again deprive them of the Kossovo, as well as of their southern provinces. In taking up arms, therefore, against the Italians, their generous resolve to liberate Albania was perhaps seconded by their desire to win the political support of the Allies and to prove to their own people that they were no less patriotic than the Communists.

Thus, by the end of 1942, there were two distinct resistance movements, the Communist-directed L.N.C., which comprised, without combining, Abas Kupi's group, and the conservative Balli Kombetar. It is doubtful whether at this time their total effectives exceeded six thousand men; and their operations still caused their enemies little more than spasmodic annoyance. Nevertheless, they formed a rallying point for discontented elements of every kind; and the Italians justly feared that, in a country where the carrying of arms was so general, their activities might suddenly assume alarming proportions. In the spring of 1943, therefore, the Italian High Command decided to bring the strength of their army of occupation up to five and a half divisions; a proportion of one Italian soldier to every three Albanians of military age.

5

*669
648
It was at this stage in the growth of the resistance movement that Maclean and Smiley had crossed the border into Albania. At first Partisans and Ballists had alike regarded them with undisguised suspicion; but each in turn soon recognised that a British Mission might bring them powerful moral and material support; and they began to compete with one another for the favour of the British officers.

Maclean found the Partisan forces predominantly composed

669*
648

of youths, and including a number of women's units. Poorly organised and ill-equipped, their morale was none the less remarkable; and there could be no doubt that they were actively, if not always effectively, fighting the Italians. After careful investigation, therefore, Maclean recommended that they should receive British support. Considerable quantities of arms, ammunition, and gold sovereigns were dropped to them by parachute; and with the help of these supplies a number of new bands were raised. Maclean and Smiley, moreover, personally undertook the training of two shock brigades of Partisans, which were later to form the backbone of the L.N.C. army.

Both officers spent several weeks with the Central Council of the L.N.C. and came to know the leaders of the movement well. Mustafa Jinishi and Ymer Dyshnitsa seemed the most co-operative and agreeable; Enver Hoja, their leader, the best organiser, but more dogmatic and less friendly; Seifullah Maleshova, the cleverest, but of a sarcastic turn of mind and, so it seemed to the Englishmen, deeply imbued with the anti-British prejudices of the Comintern. A powerful but more sinister figure was Ali Dushanovitch, a Serb from the Kossovo, reputed to be Tito's delegate to the L.N.C. Ali seemed to exercise great influence over the Partisan leaders and would sometimes intervene most effectively in their discussions, striding up and down, biting his nails and delivering scathing criticisms of British policy in the Balkans. In the course of their journeys, Maclean and Smiley also met Muslim Peza and Baba Faya and, while admiring their personal qualities, soon discovered the extent of their political impotence.

In general, they found the leaders of the L.N.C. often slow to co-operate and always suspicious of British intentions. Indeed, every time Maclean gave support to the Balli Kombetar in their operations against the Italians he found himself accused by Enver Hoja of deliberately seeking to strengthen reactionary elements in Albania. Nor could he escape coming to the conclusion that the Communist leaders were more interested in eliminating their rivals and seizing political power after the war than in the immediate task of killing Italians. Despite

*669 these mutual suspicions, however, relations between them
648 remained cordial, and their differences of political opinion were often the subject of good-natured chaff. On one occasion Enver Hoja treated Smiley to a considerable speech, advocating a new world order on Communist lines. They were standing in front of a map of the world; and when Enver had finished he pointed to the map and said:

"And how would you like to see the world?"

"I'd also like to see it painted red all over," Smiley answered, adding after a pause: "but not the red you're thinking of!"

The forces of the Balli Kombetar seemed to Maclean and Smiley weaker in numbers, organisation, and morale than those of the L.N.C. Some indeed of their leaders paid more heed to British advice than did the Communists, but their zeal for war was severely restrained by the enjoyment of their present riches. While, therefore, the British officers gave them some supplies of arms and money, and occasionally took part in their operations against the enemy, the greater part of their efforts was devoted to the training and supplying of the Partisans.

In the seven months that their mission lasted the two British officers gave proof of tireless energy and travelled through almost every district of South and Central Albania. Wherever they went they stirred up unrest among the Albanians and provided the sinews of revolt in the shape of arms and of gold. They soon found, however, that they could not personally supervise the activities of all the different guerilla groups; and accordingly, at their request, new teams of British officers, wireless operators, and saboteurs were dropped to the principal centres of Albanian resistance.

6

THE victories won by the Allies in the spring and summer of 1943 brought about a crisis in the affairs of Italy. Sicily was occupied by British and American armies; in Rome divided

counsels prevailed; and it seemed to many that Italy would sue 669*
for peace before the summer was out. The western regions of 648
the Balkans were mainly garrisoned by Italian armies; and it was therefore widely believed that an Allied invasion of Italy would be followed almost at once by landings on the east coast of the Adriatic, designed to receive, or if necessary to compel, the surrender of the Italian forces of occupation. Such speculation aroused hopes of early liberation among the Albanians; and men hastened to join the insurgent forces to take part in the final destruction of the enemy.

The prospect of an Italian collapse, however, brought the insurgent leaders up against the problem of who was to succeed to the government of Albania; and, believing that power would lie with the strongest guerilla forces, they sharpened their daggers for internal strife. The Partisans were convinced that the British and Americans would do all in their power to oppose the setting up of a Communist state in Albania, and they therefore determined to eliminate all possible rivals before an Allied landing could take place. They knew that the Albanian Fascists and collaborationists were too discredited to be a danger to them once the Italians had surrendered, and they therefore directed their energies against the Balli Kombetar, who were their natural class enemies. The Ballists, for their part, were not slow to take up the challenge; and relations between the two parties soon deteriorated to a point where armed clashes occurred.

Alarmed by the danger of civil war, Abas Kupi decided to 669*
intervene in the dispute. His aim was to restore the monarchy and preserve the interests of the Ghegs; and, wishing to prevent the preponderance alike of Communist or of Republican influence, he sought to include both parties in a United Front in which he and his friends might hold the balance of power. He therefore took the initiative in proposing to his colleagues on the Central Council of the L.N.C., and to the Ballist leaders, that they should come to terms. The Ballists accepted the suggestion at once, for they knew that it was favoured by the British and were besides aware of their own military weakness; but among the Communist leaders opinion was divided.

offered an alliance to the L.N.C.; but they refused to recognise 669*
the Zogists;[1] and from this time his relations with Enver Hoja 665
steadily deteriorated. A clash was feared; but a few weeks later a German punitive expedition drove the main body of the Partisans back across the Shkumbi; and geographical separation imposed an uneasy truce on both sides.

Meanwhile Gani, Said, and Hassan Kryeziu had returned 669*
to the Jakova mountains. With the other prisoners at Ventotteno they had been transferred to a camp on the mainland in the summer of 1943, following rumours of an Allied descent on the island, and had escaped to Rome in the confusion that followed the announcement of the armistice. There they had found Mehmet Bey Konitza, an Albanian of distinction, whose advice the Germans had sought in deciding which Albanian internees might safely be allowed to return to their homes. Mehmet Bey was an old friend of the Kryeziu family and had surreptitiously entered their names upon his list, thus procuring for them the necessary travel permits. With these they had returned to Jakova and, after spending one night in their family home, had taken to the mountains with a bodyguard of a hundred men.

7

By the autumn of 1943 the number of British Missions operating 669*
in Albania had become so considerable that it was decided to 648
recall Maclean to report and to send in a more senior officer, Brigadier Davies, to take command. Accordingly, in November, Maclean and Smiley were evacuated by Motor Torpedo-Boat from the neighbourhood of Valona,[2] and, after preparing in Cairo the first detailed report to be received on the Albanian situation, were sent to London to acquaint the Foreign Secretary and other interested parties with their experiences and opinions.

---

[1] Also known as the "Legality" movement, after the name which Zog had given to his party in the revolution of 1924.

[2] By a curious coincidence the boat which evacuated Maclean and Smiley 000
brought in my former colleague, Sandy Glen, who was to spend some weeks reconnoitring the South Albanian coast for the Admiralty.

*669
648

Maclean and Smiley were naturally given to improvisation and had always travelled light. Brigadier Davies, however, felt the need of a more numerous staff, and, in accordance with accepted military standards of establishment, set up a headquarters composed of a full complement of staff officers G. and Q. This impressive but unwieldy organisation was served by a chief clerk and a signals officer commanding several wireless operators, and was furnished with the latest collapsible camp furniture, as well as several hundredweight of stationery. Its defence, however, was entrusted to unreliable tribal levies; and its mobility was doubtfully assured by a baggage-train of more than a hundred mules, hard to feed and impossible to hide. Maclean's more instinctive methods of work were now replaced by regular military schedules. Orders were given for the whole mission to stand to at sunrise and at sunset. As a precautionary measure action stations were assumed whenever a shot was heard — an unfortunate decision in view of the Albanian propensity for *feu de joie*; and the guerillas were astonished or amused by the precise but incomprehensible evolutions of their allies. Altogether it was magnificent but, to paraphrase Marshal Bosquet, it was not guerilla war.

The Brigadier had been in Albania little more than a month and was still feeling his way among its complex and unfamiliar problems when winter fastened on the mountains — the harshest winter of the war. Short of food and almost destitute of boots and warm clothing, the Central Council of the L.N.C. were hard put to it to keep their forces in being at all. Then, to make matters worse, the Germans began a series of determined punitive operations, designed to destroy the guerilla movement altogether. The leaders of the L.N.C. were in many ways inefficient from a military point of view. Their endurance, however, was boundless; and, relying on their superior mobility, made possible by living off the country and on short rations, they were prepared to take what often seemed to the British officers to be quite unnecessary risks. Brigadier Davies was an older man than Enver Hoja; and his staff was both bigger and more accustomed to heavy baggage and sustaining food than were the Communist leaders. He had meant

*669
648

BRIGADIER DAVIES AND HIS STAFF, AUTUMN 1943
(*Left to Right*) Smythe, Davies, Hare, Nicholls, Maclean, Smiley

*669

VDEKJE FASHIZMIT
LIRI POPULLIT

PARTISANS IN LIBERATED POGRADETZ, OCTOBER 1943
The Partisans slogan " Death to Fascism ; Liberty to the People "
is inscribed over the door

[-68a-]

*119 648

at first to remain permanently with the Central Council, but already in the autumn he had found it difficult to keep pace with their forced marches. He decided, therefore, to limit his contact with them to messengers and occasional meetings and began to move southwards, planning to return to Italy to make a personal report on the Albanian situation. Then came the snow. The Brigadier's boots gave way at the end of a long march: they could not be replaced. His Chief-of-Staff, Colonel Nicholls, contracted frostbite in his feet and for ten days dared not take off his boots in case he could not get them on again. Meanwhile the German trap was closing round them; their baggage-train was ambushed; and their mules, wireless sets, and stores were captured. Food became desperately short; the Partisan forces disintegrated; and the Brigadier now lost touch altogether both with the Central Council and with his own sub-missions.

He planned to break through to a safer district to the south, but blizzard conditions impeded the march, and, on the 7th of January, the Mission took refuge in a sheepfold above the little village of Kostengje. There, next morning, they were ambushed by a band of Albanian quislings. The enemy surrounded them on three sides, and, keeping just out of range of the British submachine-guns, poured a steady rifle fire into the wattle structure where they sheltered. To have stayed there would have been certain death; the only hope of escape lay in climbing some hundreds of feet up a steep and bare snow slope behind the sheepfold. The attempt was made; the Brigadier was hit three times, twice in the stomach; and two other members of the party were wounded with him. These three were captured and brought back to Tirana, where they were handed over to the Germans. Nicholls reached the crest of the ridge with the survivors; among them Alan Hare, the Brigadier's ablest staff officer, who had refused to leave his wounded chief until ordered to escape. After a sixteen hours' march they shook off their pursuers and a few days later decided to disperse; Hare to the south to resume wireless contact with Headquarters and Nicholls to the north in search of help. Hare could still walk, though already very lame from frostbite; but when

669
648

Nicholls tried to go on he found that he could no longer stand. Gangrene had set in in both his feet; and for several days he had to be dragged over the rough mountain paths, sitting on his overcoat. At length he was found a mule, but he was already too weak to ride unsupported and fell, dislocating his shoulder. Few men can have suffered more, but Nicholls refused to give in. Three weeks after the ambush he was at last rescued by Seymour, a survivor from one of the British sub-missions to the north, who brought him to the house of Ihsan Bey Toptani, near to Tirana. Ihsan sent for a doctor; an amputation was attempted; but it was too late. The limit of endurance had been passed and a few hours later Nicholls[1] was dead.

The remaining officers and men of the Headquarters and of the various sub-missions in North and Central Albania wandered for several weeks in the high mountains. Some were captured by the enemy, others were attacked by robbers for their gold and weapons, and yet others marched on through the snow in search of food and shelter. But the capture of the Brigadier had brought about a sharp fall in British prestige; and the mountaineers, fearful of German reprisals, turned hostile and barred their doors against the fugitives. In the end most of the survivors found their way to Abas Kupi's territory, where they were given hospitality and protection. There they were reorganised by Hare and Seymour, who were presently able to renew wireless communications with Cairo and to send out a report of the winter's disaster.

Meanwhile the main body of the L.N.C. had made their way back into South Albania by forced marches, twice narrowly escaping encirclement and annihilation. They regrouped in the mountains near Berat, and, thanks to British support, eventually recovered from their defeats. Abas Kupi for his part bowed before the storm and disbanded most of his forces to their homes, maintaining only a bodyguard of some two hundred men. He now devoted himself to organising a firm basis for his movement in Central Albania and to extending its influence to the principal towns and among the chiefs of the North. Meanwhile he suspended operations against the

---

[1] Nicholls was posthumously awarded the George Cross.

669*
648

Germans, waiting for campaigning weather to come again and for the clouds to lift from the political situation.

To the observers in London and Cairo, intently watching the movements of the tiny flags on their staff maps, it seemed as if the backbone of the Albanian revolt had been broken. The forces of the L.N.C. were said to be reduced to seven thousand men and these were confined to the mountains of the South; in Central Albania the Zogist forces were virtually disbanded; and few believed that Gani Kryeziu would again raise an effective force. Yet the need for some reorganisation was urgent; for, with the summer, the Germans were expected to begin their withdrawal from the Balkans; and the High Command had counted on the guerillas to harass their retreat through Albania. Moreover, Albania possessed a Mediterranean coast-line; and His Majesty's Government could not be altogether indifferent to the country's political future. Following, therefore, on Maclean's report to the interested authorities in London, it was decided to work for a reconciliation between the Zogists and the L.N.C. and to encourage them to united action against the Germans. This was believed to be the course best calculated to inflict the maximum losses on the German army in its retreat, and most likely, by the broadening of the resistance movement which it would imply, to lead to the eventual establishment of a truly representative Albanian Government. To give effect to these decisions Maclean was invited to go back to Albania, this time to Abas Kupi's area.

000 On the way back to Bari we stopped near Brindisi to call on Count Carlo Frasso, who was held to be an Italian expert on Albania. Count Carlo was reputed a friend of the British, but as *Co-Belligerency* was still in its infancy, we had been instructed to present ourselves to him under false names. This was to be the cause of some merriment, for the Duke of Spoleto — once uncrowned king of Croatia — was staying with the Count, and at dinner, as is sometimes the way of royalty, bombarded us with questions about our families. This called for flights of fancy on our part appropriate to our fictitious names; and to each other's great amusement we spent much of the meal telling the Duke of the eccentricities of our imaginary relatives. Apart, however, from this diversion and our enjoyment of the Count's excellent hospitality, we also learnt something of the personality and influence of Nureddin Bey Vlora, a nephew of Ismail Kemal. Our host knew him well and described him as: " too great a patriot to accept foreign domination, but too great a gentleman to work with the Communists ".

* 669 648 Bari was the operational base on which the British liaison officers with the Balkan guerilla movements depended for their supplies and day-to-day instructions. Accordingly, when all other preparations were completed, we attended a conference at the Headquarters of the " D " Organisation where the charter of our mission and our exact terms of reference were discussed. Our final instructions as then agreed were:

1. To reorganise and co-ordinate the activities of the British missions in Gheg Albania:
2. To raise the Ghegs in general, and the Zogist forces of Abas Kupi in particular, against the Germans:
3. To attempt to bring about co-operation between the Zogist movement and the L.N.C.

We were to be responsible to the H.Q. Balkan Air Force, under the command of Air-Marshal Elliot, and through him to General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson,[1] the Supreme Allied

---

[1] Now Field-Marshal Lord Wilson.

*669 Commander in the Mediterranean theatre of operations. 648 Political matters were to be referred to the Foreign Office, through the diplomatic staff of the Resident Minister of State, Mr. Harold Macmillan; but Maclean was authorised to communicate direct with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in cases of overriding importance and urgency. Details of policy were to await our estimate of the situation. We were, however, authorised to promise arms to all who would fight the Germans, though we were given to understand that no supplies would be sent to any guerilla leader until he had first taken the field.

000 Once we had received our final instructions there was no more to be done until the experts in wind and weather should appoint a day for our departure. They wasted no time; and on 17th April, the anniversary of Maclean's first landing in Albania, we drove out along the road that follows the flat and dreary Apulian shore to Brindisi, where an aeroplane was waiting. We spent the morning supervising the packing of our gear into steel containers specially designed for parachuting, and watched them being loaded on to the 'plane. For the rest of the day we sought to kill time and subdue our own nervous impatience speculating on the problems that lay ahead of us, reading papers, playing cards, or walking the cold and windy streets of Brindisi.

Towards evening we drove out to the aerodrome, and, after taking leave of the staff officers who had accompanied us thus far, took off half an hour before sunset. The 'plane was a U.S. Dakota and through the big door in its flank, left open for our jump, we watched the Italian coast recede while sea and sky melted into one another as the darkness drew on. Our pilot had to locate two dropping-grounds: the first destined to receive our gear but judged too rocky for our own descent, the second where we were to jump ourselves. The flight across the Adriatic lasted perhaps three-quarters of an hour; and it was barely night when we made out the signal fires of the first of our targets. Here the American despatcher, assisted by Peter Kemp, who had come to see us off — " somewhat literally ", as Smiley remarked — heaved the containers out into space. In

000 weeks, so that his appreciation of events was necessarily tentative. He saw little hope, however, of reconciling Zogists and Partisans, and believed that our Headquarters gravely underrated the difficulties of bringing Abas Kupi back into the fight. Hare's state of health, as well as his length of service in Albania, would fully have entitled him to seek evacuation; and indeed we had been ordered to relieve both him and Seymour. We judged, however, that his support would be a great strength to us and easily prevailed on him to remain. Seymour also volunteered to stay to help ensure continuity of policy.

5

[622] THE evening after we had reached Derye we received the visit of Kiamil, the headman of the village, who had protected and provided for the British Mission during the anxious winter months. Kiamil was an Albanian of the old school, dressed in a handsome, dark-blue cloak and remarkable by the extraordinary whiteness of his hands. He was indeed afflicted with a curious complex, whereby he felt impelled to wash his hands and mouth every hour of the day, a proceeding which excited the wonder of the villagers, though without in any degree inducing their emulation. He spoke Turkish, Arabic, and a little French, having studied at Salonika; and was eager for news of the Near East where he had travelled as a young man. A pious Moslem he would touch no alcohol, and in any case refused to take food or drink outside his own house. He greeted us with the old-fashioned salaam, discussed general topics for half an hour, and then delivered a message from Abas Kupi to say that he had learned of our arrival, and was on his way to meet us.

* 669 648 ● Abas Kupi duly reached Derye on the following evening [1] with a force of about a hundred men. He put off meeting us that night, pleading fatigue from the march, but came next morning to the house where we were lodged, accompanied by a few armed bodyguards. He was dressed now in riding-

[1] [late April, 1944 -- Analyst]

breeches and a grey " redingote " which heightened his likeness 669*
to Napoleon; but he looked older and leaner than when I had 648
seen him in Belgrade. We sat cross-legged round the hearth 186
in the upper room; and when the exchange of formal greetings was done Maclean spoke of the aims of our Mission. He explained that we had been charged to help the Ghegs in their war against the Germans and to co-ordinate their operations with the overall strategy of the Allies. He then reviewed the military and political situation of the contending Powers, leading up to the conclusion that an Allied victory was at hand. The time had therefore come for all Albanians to lay aside their personal differences and to unite to wrest from the invaders the independence for which they had already sacrificed so much.

Abas Kupi replied at some length, but, it seemed to me, wearily, as if he had lost faith in the power of words. He welcomed us to his regions with warmth and courtesy, and expressed his deep indignation that Albanians should have been responsible for the capture of Brigadier Davies. A harsh winter and lack of arms had forced him on to the defensive; but now that we had come he hoped that we would soon make it possible for him to lead a new and final rising against the Germans. From these preliminaries he turned to questions of policy. His people were at a loss to understand why Albania was not among the United Nations, or why the Allies did not recognise King Zog who, as he remarked, had been a victim of Fascist aggression when Mr. Neville Chamberlain still believed in peace. They were anxious, moreover, for the future of the Kossovo and of Southern Albania and hoped for some assurance that these provinces would not be ceded to Yugoslavia or Greece without first consulting the wishes of the local populations. Our support of the Albanian Communists was also a cause of deep concern; and it was widely believed that, at the Teheran Conference, Albania had been assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence.

" We Albanians," he concluded, " are few and poor, but in proportion to our strength we have made great efforts and great sacrifices in the common cause. So far we have received

*669 ● 648 186 no encouragement nor recognition from the great Allies; but I still put my trust in Great Britain as I did in 1940. I have fought and I will continue to fight, but you must send me arms and make some gesture that you have our country's interest at heart, for we are Albanian patriots and not British agents."

Maclean turned a gentle answer, judging that it would be premature to try and thrash out these delicate problems at our first meeting. He proposed, however, that I should go to Abas Kupi's Headquarters to study his difficulties and explain our policy in greater detail. The Agha at once agreed, and, before leaving us, promised to send guides within a few days to bring me to him. Meanwhile we turned to the task of reorganising the British Missions.

4

000 SEYMOUR and Hare had established their base in Derye because it was near to the Tirana road and thus suitable as an observation post. The very conditions, however, which made the village easily accessible to visitors or couriers from the capital exposed it to the danger of sudden enemy raids. The British officers were thus obliged to lead a strictly conspiratorial existence, which severely restricted the scope of their activities. They seldom ventured out in daylight; most of their business was conducted through intermediaries; and fear of detection forced them to relegate their wireless set and operator to a rear base in the mountains. This rear base was a day's march away, so that all communictions with Headquarters in Italy suffered a delay of at least twenty-four hours. The drawbacks of this situation had hitherto been outweighed by its advantages; Seymour and Hare might indeed have enjoyed greater freedom and security in some remote mountain village, but, under winter conditions, they would then have been cut off from their chief sources of intelligence and supply. Now, however, that the snow was melting and that the mountain paths were practicable once more, Derye ceased to be convenient without becoming safe. There were already rumours that the Germans had wind of the Mission's whereabouts; and Maclean therefore

to preserve our military status while assuring our comfort; 000 but, despite our badges of rank and decorations, we seldom contrived to look anything but irregular. Maclean wore light Albanian sandals, jodhpurs, and a heavy, green regimental tunic. Smiley favoured corduroy trousers and a battledress blouse. My own clothes were a hard-wearing cord tunic and trousers, the latter tucked Russian fashion into soft knee-length field-boots. These were heavy, but a great protection against rocks and thorns, and invaluable in the uncertainties of the night march. Mindful of Napoleon's dictum on the importance of an army's stomach, each of us wore a broad sash wound about his waist. This was a most necessary, as well as colourful, garment, protecting our digestions from insidious changes of temperature and fortifying them against the successive feasts and fasts of an outlaw's life. For arms each of us carried a Merlin submachine-gun and a Colt ·45 automatic. The submachine-gun was accurate up to about two hundred yards and deadly in an ambush. Its moral effect, moreover, was as great as its killing power; and an irresolute enemy was often driven back merely by its noise and rate of fire. The ·45 Colt was intended for our personal protection in camp or in the house; it was very powerful at close range; and a single shot from it might knock down an assailant, even if it only hit him in the hand.

On arriving in Ziber our[1] attention had at once been 669* engaged by the presence in a neighbouring village of nineteen 648 British officers and men: the remnant of the various Missions scattered in the disasters of the previous winter. Their chief concern, and indeed duty, had been first to survive, and then to recover their strength, of which frostbite and illness had taken a heavy toll. There was indeed little else that they could have done; for the winter and Abas Kupi's policy of expectant neutrality had made offensive operations impossible. For several months now Hare and Seymour had formed the only active part of the Mission. The others had accordingly been relegated to the safety of the mountains, where they had nothing to do but guard the wireless set and collect the occa-

[1] [i.e. Amery's liaison group -- Analyst]

*669
648
sional supplies that were dropped from Italy. There they had waited for the spring; herded into a single room, often short of food though not, apparently, of alcohol, and a prey to all the demoralising influences of boredom and inactivity.

Maclean was rightly determined that our Mission should carry as little ballast as possible, and at once decided to be rid of a concentration of men who had to be fed and protected but could not be usefully employed. The greater part were therefore sent south for evacuation by sea from the coastal area held by the Partisans. A few, however, were kept to strengthen the three other British Missions in Northern Albania, whose activities Maclean was to co-ordinate. The most northerly of these was in the region of Nikai and Mertur, beyond the Kukes–Scutari road: there Squadron-Leader Neel and Captain Hibberdine maintained intermittent contact with Gani Kryeziu and watched the situation among the Catholic tribes. The next consisted of Major Riddle, Captain Simcox, Captain Lis — a Polish officer — and Lieutenant Hibbert. The valley of the Black Drin was their area; and they worked with Muharrem Bairaktar and the chiefs of Dibra. Finally, Captain Smythe kept a lonely watch in the Peza region, south of Tirana, where Zogist and Partisan influences intermingled. By a fortunate coincidence Hibberdine was already at Seymour's rear base; and Maclean now sent for Riddle and Smythe to tell us of the situation in their districts.

000 Our presence in Ziber was a source of considerable profit to the villagers; they earned a subsidy by providing us with a guard, sold us food at exorbitant prices and improved every opportunity of pilfering our stores. We had little, therefore, to fear from their indiscretion; and indeed the bonds of interest which united them to our cause were fortified by the knowledge that they would suffer dire reprisals from the Germans if we were discovered, and from Abas Kupi if we were betrayed. Nevertheless their constant attentions were expensive and wearisome; and there was always the risk that some stranger passing through the village might see us and spread the news abroad. We decided, therefore, to abandon the haunts of men

me by the hand into a dark and dusty room, hung with rifles 342
and submachine-guns. It was thronged with Zogist notables
and their bodyguards: wild and rugged men, corrugated with 714
cartridge-belts, and festooned with pistols, daggers, and hand-grenades.
Most of them were dressed in black, baggy Turkish
breeches, braided homespun jackets of black or brown, with
multicoloured sashes wound about their waists, and white
fezes or skull-caps on their heads. A few besides were in
uniform retained from the time of their service in the Albanian
army, or looted from the Italians; while others, especially the
leaders, wore tweed or leather jackets, variously combined with
local or military costume.

We sat down, Turkish fashion, by the fire; and, while we 574
drank coffee and exchanged greetings, the guerillas milled [521]
around, or sat together in small groups, whispering intently.
To a stranger this whispering seemed sinister and blatantly
conspiratorial, but the others took no offence at it. Necessity
indeed imposed a communal way of life on the guerillas; each
man was watched by his fellows in his every movement, and
it was only by whispering that any privacy of discussion could
be preserved.

I had been there perhaps half an hour when, at a sign from 667*
Abas Kupi, the guerillas filed out of the room, and we remained 648
alone with Shaqir, my interpreter, and Colonel Murad Basha.
Basha had been a regular officer under King Zog and had
joined Abas Kupi in Belgrade in 1940. He was now the Zogist
Chief-of-Staff, but struck me from the first as pedantic and too
quick to see the difficulties in any scheme. He was indeed to
prove a defeatist influence at the Zogist Headquarters, for,
though personally no coward, he was terrified of action, like
so many senior officers who have won their spurs on the square
rather than in the field.

I began our discussions by showing Abas Kupi my credentials:
these were a letter from Stirling, who had been his [576]
friend, and a *besa* given me by King Zog. This was a covenant
enjoining upon all Albanians the duty of protecting my life and,
should their zeal prove unavailing, of avenging my death.
My *bona fides* thus established I recalled our meeting in Belgrade

*669 648 in 1940 and asked the Agha to tell me of his experiences in the years between. I wanted to hear the story for its own sake, and thought besides that his interpretation of the past would afford the most natural explanation of his present outlook. He[1] smiled and began the detailed narrative of his adventures, enlivened by occasional flashes of sardonic humour, but unadorned except for matter-of-fact accounts of his own feelings at the time. He spoke in a low voice, prodding the glowing embers on the hearth as he talked, and looking up every now and then to see if the point of his sentence had reached me through the interpreter. It was near midnight before he had done; but it was a good story, and through it shone the consistency of the man and the skill with which he had preserved his independence from all those who had sought to use him for their own ends. Of these we were but the latest; and, next day, in a brief message to Maclean, I wrote: " Here is a fish whom many have hooked but none have ever landed ".

[665] We continued our talks in the morning and discussed the structure and policy of the Zogist movement. Its main fighting strength was drawn from the regions of Mati, Kruya, and Tirana, each of which had some special connection with the royalist cause. Zog was a man of Mati, and in his reign the valley had grown rich above all other districts in Albania. Tirana had been his chosen capital, whose claims he had consistently defended against the rival cities of Scutari and Valona. As for Kruya, it was Abas Kupi's birthplace, and he had governed it for fifteen years under the King. The Agha claimed that the clans in these three districts might muster ten thousand men; but they were ill-equipped and desperately short of ammunition. The movement, however, was spreading beyond Central Albania and already commanded the support of a number of former army and gendarmerie officers, the bulk of the Tirana merchants as well as certain Gheg chieftains and prominent Tosks. I was given the list of the members of the Central Committee and recognised the names of several well-known men, mostly landowners or intellectuals, but with a good record of opposition against the Italians.

The Agha's immediate aim was to build up alliances with

[1] [i.e. Abas Kupi, leader of Zogist movement--Analyst]

the chiefs of Dibra and of the Catholic tribes beyond the Drin. He made no secret, however, of the advances that had been made to him by the Tirana Government and the Balli Kombetar, and told me frankly of his contacts with the " collaborationist " leaders. These men knew as well as he did that the Germans had lost the war, and were only too anxious to " work their passage home ". He saw no reason, therefore, why he should not exploit such influence as they still possessed; for it was not in his nature to hate or to persecute those whom he no longer feared.

I now broached the subject of the Partisans, but saw at once that he regarded them as enemies. They were indeed the real danger to his cause, as contrasted with the " collaborationists " whose power to hurt him had long been on the wane. His natural inclination had been to destroy them before they grew too strong and he had only refrained from attacking them out of respect for the wishes of the British. I urged various arguments upon him in favour of reconciliation, but, though he agreed to its advantages, he doubted whether it was any longer possible.

" If you will impose friendship between us," he said, " I shall be glad. But I know these men and, *Wallahi!* they will not have it."

We now turned to the critical subject of military action. The Agha regarded himself as at war with the Germans and pointed to the presence of British military Missions on his territory as proof of this claim. He admitted, indeed, that he had not taken the offensive since the autumn; but the winter had been harsh, and all his energies had gone into building up a strong organisation with which he might lead a general rising when the time came. The people besides had been demoralised by the failure of their revolt the year before. The British Missions had incited them to action; there had been no British landing; instead their homes had been burnt, their relatives interned, and their flocks carried off. The Germans were not as pestilential as the Italians, but they were ruthless fellows, and the tribesmen would hesitate to attack them again, at least until we sent them arms and ammunition. The time

648
[*669] had surely come, moreover, for the Allies to take the Albanian people into their confidence; they had made great sacrifices for a nation of only a million people; and, if they were now called upon to shed their blood once more, they deserved to be told what was to be their future. Meanwhile he could only repeat his demands for the recognition by the Allies of King Zog, the inclusion of Albania among the United Nations, and an assurance that the fate of the frontier provinces would not be settled without first consulting the wishes of their inhabitants.

We broke off our discussions for the midday meal and afterwards I prolonged the hour of siesta, reflecting on the Agha's words and preparing my answer. The substance of his remarks was that he saw no prospect of reaching agreement with the Partisans, and that the Zogists would require supplies of arms and certain political concessions before they could again attack the Germans. As I saw it the second of these two issues comprehended the first. The two parties would probably fail to come to terms of their own accord, but British intervention might still impose an uneasy alliance and so avert civil war. Such intervention, however, would scarcely be justified unless both parties were already engaged against the Germans. To bring the Zogists into action, therefore, was not only an end desirable in itself but also the only means whereby the rival resistance movements might still be reconciled.

Having thus simplified my problem, I had next to consider how to persuade Abas Kupi to take the field. I knew for certain that the Foreign Office would never grant such political concessions as he had requested; nor could I hope that our Headquarters would send him arms until he had first given proof of his good faith by renewing the attack. Words are seldom by themselves sufficient to alter the direction of a political movement. A first step, however, to bringing him back into the war was to answer his objections and show good cause why he should fight. I had therefore to make it plain that, in the British view, the onus was on him to win military and political support by his actions and not on us to induce him to engage the common enemy. To this end I now worked out a line of argument which in its essentials was to become our Mission's "party line". When we renewed our talks that afternoon I tried it out for the first time.

"I was in Belgrade," I began, "when you joined us there in the dark days of 1940; and no one knows better than I how much you have done in the common cause. If I speak frankly then it is because I know that you are our friend." It might be that in the past justice had not been done to Albania. But if mistakes had been made the task of correcting them was infinitely complicated by the intestine divisions of the Albanians. Abas Kupi had asked that we should recognise King Zog; but the Partisans were implacably opposed to his restoration; and the Partisans were fighting the Germans. He had proposed the formation of an Albanian Government in London; but there was no agreement among the Albanian political parties and we could not tell which of them most nearly represented the will of the Albanian people. He had also demanded Albania's inclusion among the United Nations, but there was as yet no Albanian sovereign body with which that organisation might treat. It was all most regrettable but it was not altogether our fault: for the time being, therefore, we could only pledge ourselves to restore Albania to independence. He had spoken, too, of self-determination for the Kossovo and Southern Albania. The Yugoslavs and Greeks, however, also had some claim to these regions and they were fighting the Germans. We only wanted to see justice done, but we were not alone among the Allies; and he must realise that Albania's claims might well be prejudiced by his continued inactivity.

He had asked that we should send him arms. This had been our chief purpose in coming to Albania, and we should do so on as large a scale as possible as soon as he took the field. We might wish to do so before, but there were strong reasons why we could not. Our arsenals were not inexhaustible, and from all over Europe and Asia came appeals for arms from men who were fighting the enemy with their bare hands. In Albania the Partisans were already at war and we should be very wrong to reduce their supplies in favour of a non-belligerent. The Agha had told us that the Zogists were our friends while the Partisans were only instruments of Russia. It might be true, but we could not for that divert arms from their men who were fighting to his who were not. The Russians were our allies and to do so would be to invite Russian accusations that we were thinking more about our post-war interests than about the prosecution of the war. No doubt the Russians also had an eye on the future, but at least the Communists justified the support they got by the number of Germans they killed. It was up to the Zogists to do the same; for we should certainly not weaken our alliance with Russia for their sake. Hitler's last hope was to divide us and we meant to disappoint him. The Agha might guess for himself where our sympathies lay; Great Britain was not a monarchy for nothing, but the Zogists must prove their worth if they wanted our support.

"If you fight," I concluded, "we will send you arms. If you fight we will do all in our power to resolve your differences with the Partisans. Play your part and we will play ours. The future of your King and country is in your own hands."

Abas Kupi was plainly disconcerted by these arguments, and for some moments after I had done there was a stony silence. It was indeed scarcely to be expected that we should reach agreement so early; and he may well have believed that, just as he had pitched his own demands high, so there might be an element of bargaining in my absolute rejection of all concessions. I was convinced, however, by the tone of an altercation which now arose between Abas Kupi and Murad Basha that Abas wanted to fight but was held back by unseen forces. These might be merely lack of arms, or perhaps the contrary opinions of his supporters, but in either case he would be unlikely to admit to them for fear of losing prestige in our eyes. If my instinct was right, we should make no further progress by direct negotiations until we had studied the Zogist movement for ourselves. I had heard that the Agha was soon to make a progress through Mati and Kruya and therefore asked if Maclean and I might accompany him. This would give us the chance of meeting the Zogist chiefs and members of the Central Committee, and of gauging the state of public opinion for ourselves. He welcomed the proposal; and the tension between us was insensibly eased by the prospect of a further 648 exchange of views.

It was already dark when we made an end of our discussions, but Abas Kupi none the less decided that we should move that same evening to another village. [261]. I thought at first that this was a precaution against surprise attacks but, on enquiry, was told the simpler truth: in the two days that we had been there the bodyguard had devoured such food as the village could spare and no more could be obtained for the evening meal without straining the loyalty of the inhabitants. Hunger indeed was the sternest taskmaster of the guerillas, and the struggle to find food kept them continually on the move. We set out, therefore, into the night and, after an hour's march, came to a village where I was lodged with Abas Kupi and his staff in a large, two-storied house.

A blizzard sprang up in the night and we woke to find the face of the mountains whitened with snow. I was impatient to join Maclean and discuss my impressions with him, but the fury of the elements kept us indoors all day. By next morning, however, the gale had dropped; I therefore took leave of Abas Kupi and, crossing the range, rode back into the camp at dusk.

6

TWELVE days had passed since we had landed in Albania[1] 727 and we had by now reorganised the network of British Missions and assured our own mobility and communications with Headquarters. Our next task was to complete a reconnaissance of the situation which confronted us. According to our information there were some twenty-five thousand German troops in Albania, belonging, most of them, to the XXI Mountain Corps. The Corps Headquarters were in Tirana, and controlled the 297th Infantry Division, deployed in Central and Southern Albania, and the 181st Mountain Division, based on Scutari.[1] There were besides some units in the South belonging to the

---

[1] The 181st Mountain Division was also responsible for internal security in Southern Montenegro.

[1] [i.e. on the night of 18th April, 1944 -- Analyst]

186 poorest villages through which we passed the women would
000 run out and kiss his hands or hold up their children to him.

Night overtook us in the trough between the range and Mount Kruya ; and an hour or so later we were received into a dilapidated house, built in a hollow some two hundred feet below the main Mati–Kruya road. There we were to meet representatives of the Zogist Central Committee next morning. Our position was exposed, and doubly so since our presence there was already known to the Committee in Tirana. Abas Kupi therefore posted sentries along the paths leading towards the house, and we slept that night with one eye open.

*669 The representatives of the Zogist Committee, Salih Hoja
648 Vuchitern and Teke Zelenitsa, arrived in the small hours of the morning. Both were badly shaken, for, by a strange irony, the car in which they had travelled from Tirana had been "strafed" on the road by an R.A.F. fighter 'plane. The pilot could hardly have been expected to know that they were on the business of the British Mission, but it was an unfortunate prelude to our talks. Salih Hoja was a Balkan politician of the old school, a blend of peasant guile and Byzantine diplomacy. He had been a powerful influence under King Zog ; but now his close-cropped hair was grown white with years, his voice was querulous, and his hand shook. Zelenitza was a younger man and had been an official in the palace. He was of an acid disposition, and, though more westernised than old Salih, lacked his courtesy and understanding. The two men had come out to press for political concessions, and we saw from the start that they would not agree to fight until some at least of their demands had been granted. Such an attitude was not indeed unnatural, for they were primarily politicians and knew that, once fighting started, it would be too late for them to intervene. Questions of policy would then tend to become subordinated to the immediate needs of war, and the control of the Zogist movement would pass out of their hands.

They began accordingly by repeating the principal demands which Abas Kupi had already made : the inclusion of Albania among the United Nations, the recognition of King Zog, self-determination for the Kossovo, and military support for the

669*
648

Zogist movement. Then in great detail, supported by a wealth of documentary evidence, they spoke to us of the Communist danger in the Balkans, and of the close connection between Moscow, Tito, and the L.N.C. Much of this we knew already, but they laboured the point as if we had not fully understood their meaning. So steeped were they, indeed, in their studies of the Eastern Question that they could not believe that any British Government would allow, let alone encourage, the spread of Russian influence to the Adriatic sea.

We answered, as on previous occasions, that if we had never ceased to recognise King Zog no problem would arise. We could not, however, recognise him now without causing serious concern to the Partisans, who were actively fighting the Germans. It was perhaps true that the Partisans reflected Russian rather than British interests; but, in our eyes, the Zogists could only maintain their claim to be our friends if they resumed the fight against the common enemy. Our alliance with Russia was the foundation of our policy, and we should therefore take no step which we could not openly justify before our Soviet allies.

When we had done, old Salih Hoja shook his head and answered:

"We know your victory is certain, but do you really need our sacrifices to justify your policy? When I was young it was enough that Great Britain had an interest at stake for her representatives to be sure that they were justified in defending it. We have already suffered once from your policies of appeasement. Believe me, the outlook for small nations will remain dark until you assert yourselves again."

We were troubled by the old man's answer, but our instructions were clear and we could not concede his demands. After some discussion, therefore, the two Zogist representatives rose to leave, promising to refer our opinions to their colleagues on the Central Committee and to send us an answer in writing.

Soon after the two men had gone a stranger was brought in by the bodyguards, bearing a letter for Abas Kupi. It was

*669
648

from Mustafa Kruya, and invited us to meet him and Mark Joni Markai for an exchange of views. Both men were still openly collaborating with the Germans and we decided that we could not take part in the talks ourselves. We agreed, however, that Abas Kupi should do so, for Mark was the son of the Captain of Mirdita and his attitude might decide the fate of Gheg resistance. The Mirdite clansmen were great warriors, and their hereditary Captain reputed worth more than five thousand rifles. Their region, moreover, marched with Mati, and, if we could bind together the Mirdites and Zogists, we should have a powerful force with which to attack the enemy and a wide expanse of territory into which we could withdraw from his wrath. Jon Marko Joni had long sided with the Axis, but we were not without hopes of obtaining his support : the tide of war was flowing in our favour, and it was believed that he had his price.

Abas Kupi left us, therefore, and that night met the two " collaborationists " in the Bektashi convent on the summit of Mount Kruya. It must have been a strange reunion, for Abas had not seen Mustafa since 1941, and, in the intervening years, each had sought to encompass the other's downfall and assassination. Neither, however, showed any sign of embarrassment, for, like wise men, they were guided by the injunction of Bias to " love as if you should hereafter hate and hate as if you should hereafter love ".

Mustafa and Mark knew that the Germans would soon be powerless to help them ; they could expect no mercy from the Communists ; and it was only by coming to terms with the Zogists that they might hope to " work their passage home ". At the same time, before they broke with the Germans, who still represented a positive, if wasting, asset, they wanted to make sure that Albania had not already been assigned to the Russian sphere of influence and that the Zogists were really strong enough to help them. They had come, therefore, to seek terms from Abas Kupi, and to learn how far he could count on British support. He never told us what answer he had given them, and, under the circumstances, we thought it more politic not to enquire.

clapping. It was, I recalled, under rather similar circumstances that the Duke of Wellington once exclaimed : " I hope these gallant fellows will frighten the enemy ; they certainly frighten me ! "

Afterwards we watched Zogist teams at their mortar and machine-gun training, and were then shown over the depleted stock of mortars and automatic weapons which the Zogists still retained from the revolt against the Italians.

Abas Kupi took no part in these unreal parades, but watched them from a distance, chatting with the local peasants and smelling a rose which one of them had given him. He joined us, however, when we began to inspect his stock of weapons and gently reminded us that his poverty in arms was in part the result of British policy. In the previous autumn an Italian division had surrendered to him and had volunteered to fight for the Allies. He had little use for them as soldiers and had planned to disarm them and distribute their weapons to his mountaineers. The British Mission, however, with its natural preference for regular soldiers as against guerillas, had insisted on letting the Italians keep their arms. All had gone well at first, but, with the approach of winter, the Italians had lost heart and had marched back into Tirana with all their equipment.

The written reply of the Central Committee reached us while we were still in Shupal. It proved to be a twenty-page memorandum, recapitulating in execrable French all the demands which Salih Hoja had made to us by the Kruya road,[1] and which we had then flatly rejected. On the vital issues of fighting the Germans and of coming to terms with the L.N.C. there was no word. This seemed to us intolerable prevarication and we decided to demand an immediate explanation from Abas Kupi. We signified, therefore, through our interpreter, that we wished to speak with him ; and he led us out from the crowded headquarters into a field where carpets had been spread. Our irritation had by this time somewhat subsided, but Maclean made a good show of anger and protested vehemently against the useless repetition of inadmissible arguments.

[1] [Cf. pp. 118-119.--Analyst]

000 "We have risked our lives," he concluded, "to find out how we can help your movement; and now you bring us this nonsense as a reply."

There was a pause; and then with a deprecating smile Abas Kupi explained that the members of the Committee had really prepared the memorandum for their first meeting with us. The typist had failed to finish it in time, but now that the fair copy was ready they had felt that it would be a pity not to send it to us.

*669 648 The tension between us was dispelled by this ridiculous admission, and the conversation now took a more serious turn. Rather to our surprise, Abas Kupi invited us to arrange for him to meet the Partisan leaders as soon as possible. His declared object was to achieve a common front with them against the Germans, and he laid down as his only condition that a British officer should be present throughout their discussions. This he regarded as an essential safeguard so that we might judge for ourselves which party was responsible, should the negotiations break down. To bring Partisans and Zogists together round a table would be the first step towards a reconciliation; and we might then hope to bring pressure to bear on both sides to prevent them from flying apart. We therefore welcomed the proposal and promised to transmit it at once to our Headquarters, and, through them, to our colleagues with the L.N.C.

The Agha then briefly referred to his earlier demands for the recognition of the King, the inclusion of Albania among the United Nations, and the self-determination of the frontier provinces. These were issues of high policy to which his Central Committee attached the greatest importance; and, as a mere soldier, he would be very reluctant to go against their advice. He would, however, do so without hesitation on orders from King Zog. The King was in London, and Abas Kupi, therefore, proposed that we should refer our differences to him and ask for his private instructions.

"Let the King send a message through your Mission," he said, "and if he tells me to fight with my bare hands, I will."

This request seemed to us an inspired alternative to the

669*
648

impracticable demands for public assurances. We had indeed resolutely set ourselves against all political concessions, but to transmit a private message would involve no commitment. It seemed only natural that a monarchist leader should wish to consult his king before taking the field; and we could see no good reason why we should not help him to do so. We felt certain besides that the King's instructions would be favourable to our policy; and once armed with a mandate from him for war Abas Kupi would be free to disregard the objections of his Central Committee.

We undertook, therefore, to transmit this second proposal also to our Headquarters, and prepared to return to our base on Mount Bastar to despatch the necessary telegrams. Several days must pass before we could expect an answer and we planned meanwhile to visit Riddle's mission in the valley of the Black Drin. Abas Kupi for his part had work in Shiyak, the province beyond Durazzo, and it was agreed that we should meet again in the first days of June.

8

000

WE rode into camp at dusk on the 21st of May, and, turning our riding ponies out to grass, joined Smiley and Hare where they reclined upon the hillside, meditating over a bottle of Marsala. The Italian orderlies presently set food before us, replaced the empty bottles with new, and wrapped blankets round our shoulders, for the mountain air was cool. Thus we prolonged the summer night exchanging news and discussing plans. In our absence Hare had been down into the plain to take soundings of opinion in Tirana and to find means of passing subversive propaganda to the enemy troops. He had picked up much interesting information and had made some useful contacts, but it would be some time before his propaganda campaign could produce results. Smiley meanwhile had reconnoitred the nearest German positions and had looked after half a dozen U.S. airmen who had baled out near Tirana and had been rescued by the Zogists. He had also received

Starting from this estimate of their military potential we 667*
had next to decide whether the Zogists could again be made 665
to fight. Abas Kupi, we believed, wanted war; for he needed British backing and was prepared to pay the price. Till now, however, he had been held back by the danger of a Partisan attack, the opposition of his political advisors, and the fear of reprisals and poverty of weapons which paralysed the clans. Arms we could supply once fighting had begun, and money enough to compensate for reprisals; but to reconcile Zogists and Partisans, and to convert the Zogist Committee to our way of thinking were thornier problems. Abas Kupi knew that to remain neutral as between Germans and Partisans was to court isolation and to risk falling between two stools. Originally, when the Axis Powers had been supreme, he had worked with the Communists against the Italians; later, as the Axis star declined, he had hoped to use the Germans to destroy the Communists. We had now convinced him that such a course would fatally compromise his relations with us; and, since in the last analysis the fate of the Monarchist cause would depend on our support, he was once more prepared to join hands with the Communists against the Germans. Whether they would prove equally amenable seemed uncertain, but we had at least brought the Agha to agree to negotiations; and it was now up to our Headquarters and to our colleagues with the L.N.C. to do their part. Their task would doubtless be easier if Abas Kupi attacked the Germans; but here we entered on a vicious circle, for it was to a large extent his fear of the Partisans which inhibited him from taking the field.

But the chief obstacle to action, and the root cause of the 669*
defeatism of Abas Kupi's political advisers, was their mistrust 648
of British policy. They suspected that we had already assigned Albania to the Russian zone of influence, and regarded such a prospect not as liberation but as a change of masters. They had therefore demanded political assurances from us, as a test of our intentions; and, by refusing to commit ourselves, we had only seemed to confirm their worst suspicions. We had feared for a time that our negotiations must end in deadlock, but Abas Kupi's alternative request for private instructions from

669 648 King Zog now seemed to offer an escape from the impasse. Zog was in London, the heart of Allied councils, and thus surely in the best position to decide where his honour and interests lay. If he would order Abas Kupi to take the field, then there would be an end of political wrangling and we could look forward to fighting in like measure as we sent arms. Instructions from Zog thus appeared as the cure to all our ills, but it was vital that they should be sent quickly. The clouds of civil war were already gathering in the South, and unless the Zogists took the field before they broke, the whole situation would be lost. It was essential, moreover, that our request should not be refused; for, if we again met Abas Kupi with empty hands, he must conclude either that the King was opposed to war, or that, so far from extending recognition to him, the British Government was not even prepared to enlist his informal co-operation. A decision so fundamental to our policy and so urgently required seemed to justify a direct communication with the Foreign Secretary. This concluded with the words: "There is grave danger that without this measure of encouragement Abas Kupi will go the way of General Mihailovitch".

000 I spent the whole day on the ridge drafting my report, and towards evening returned to the camp with a sense, seldom before experienced, that I had understood what I had seen and expressed what I had understood. That night we discussed my draft among ourselves, and, when each had put forward his amendments, drew up the final text. Throughout the time of our mission we made a practice of thus debating among ourselves the messages which one of us had drafted. These discussions were often long and sometimes heated, but I can recall no single instance of a telegram which was despatched without first being unanimously agreed. In this way we gradually developed a common approach to our problems and a common doctrine of revolt. This was to prove a great strength; for it meant that, even when separated from one another we could still rely that all our actions would be informed by the same purpose and interpretation of events.

*669

Muharrem Bairaktar, and the British Missions. The clan thus had a foot in every camp, and, by a masterly display of "trimming", survived both the war and the revolution.

The fortress of the Elezis had been partly destroyed by the Germans, who had set fire to it to punish Tsen for harbouring a British officer. The fortunate intervention of a thunderstorm had saved much of the building from the flames; but there had been no time for repairs, and it was now altogether deserted. We dismounted there, none the less, and despatched messengers to Sohodoll, who presently returned with Tsen's two sons, Gani and Islam. Both spoke English well, having studied at the American college in Tirana, and reminded us irresistibly of Mr. Can and Mr. Can't in the famous Eno's advertisement. Islam was gay and debonair, clad in a new tweed suit of a pinkish colour. Gani was dour, glum, and down-at-heel. 000

"Make yourselves at home!" said Islam cheerfully, as we sat down among the ruins of their house. A light rain fell on us through the holes in the roof, and the wind whistled through the open doorways.

"What a summer!" grumbled Gani.

"It may be good for the crops," suggested Maclean.

"No, they will be very bad," Gani replied in sepulchral tones.

"As bad as last year?" I hazarded.

"Much worse," he answered, drawing down the corners of his mouth.

Abandoning agriculture, Maclean then enquired after the health of the Elezi family.

"Thank you," Gani answered, "none of them are dead yet."

After these depressing preliminaries Maclean delivered his set speech, explaining the purpose of our mission, urging the Ghegs to fight the Germans, and stressing the dangers of their continued neutrality. Both brothers declared that they were willing to fight but argued, like Ramadan Kalloshi, that they were not strong enough to give a lead. They showed us, however, that they were seriously concerned by our policy of supporting the Partisans. 669* 648

"As you know," said Islam, "there are three parties in Albania: the agents of Germany, the agents of Russia, and the agents of England. That is quite natural, but what none of us can understand is why the agents of Russia are paid in English gold."

"Perhaps it's what they mean by lease-lend," Gani muttered.

We ate our midday meal with Gani and Islam, and in the afternoon called on Tsen's brother, Ersat, to learn something of the Dibran Partisans. He treated us to a vigorous tirade against most of the Gheg leaders, including his own brother; but his words were not matched by his deeds, for his following was small. The Gheg Partisans were still too few to undertake any actions on their own, and were waiting for Enver Hoja to launch his northern expedition.

Towards evening we abandoned the Dibran lowlands and climbed into the rugged glens of Liuma, where the snow was not yet wholly melted. Our way led up a stony gully which ended abruptly in a long slope of shifting scree. It was steep, and the going treacherous; and we dismounted, leading our ponies for the last few hundred feet. Heavy thunderclouds were billowing up at the head of the gully, and on the crest stood a square, stone barrack, grim and windswept—the lair of Osman Lita, the Black Douglas of the Liuman march. Dark, cruel, and grasping, Osman was growing old, not with the dignity which years can bring, but with a thickening of the body and wandering of the mind. He received us indeed with traditional hospitality, but I slept little that night, for it was a house of fear.

Next day we conferred with his son, Sherif, who was now the effective leader of the tribe; a lean and hungry man with cold, light eyes, who had worked for the Italians in Montenegro, spying on Mihailovitch. He listened impassively while I explained our policy, but when he understood that he could hope for neither arms nor subsidies until he fought the Germans he shook his head and answered bitterly:

"Words without gold are to us like chaff without corn."

From Osman Lita's house we climbed for some two thousand feet to a broad, moorland plateau. To the west the

ground ran down steeply to a tributary torrent of the Drin, 000
while to the east the snow-capped summit of Mount Korab rose near ten thousand feet into the sky. We pushed on for close on five hours, through woods and over moors, and soon after nightfall reached the lonely house which was Riddle's base. There we found Tony Neel, who had come south to meet us with three deserters from the enemy—a German corporal and two Turkoman soldiers in German uniform.

Maclean had served in Abyssinia with Wingate and had been greatly impressed by his doctrine of the "striking force". Wingate had held that lone British liaison officers, armed only with the weapons of persuasion, were in a weak position to influence the strategy of foreign guerilla leaders. If, on the other hand, they disposed of a disciplined body of men, or "striking force", under their own direct command, they might be able to impose their will upon their guerilla allies. The guerillas might be reluctant to fight, but the "striking force" could always attack the enemy alone; and Wingate believed that by their example they would often draw the guerilla leaders into operations which they could never have persuaded them to undertake on their own. In applying his theory to the Abyssinian campaign Wingate had trained small "striking forces" of native troops in the Sudan, and had marched them into Abyssinia under the command of British officers. By virtue of their superior discipline, these forerunners of the Burma Chindits had soon become the nuclei around which the guerillas had gathered, and had thus served as the instruments through which British strategy was imposed on the plans of the Abyssinians.

The hesitations of the Zogist leaders made us long for such 669*
a force,* and, at an early stage, we had decided to try and recruit 648
one from the Central Asian troops which the Germans employed for garrison duties. These were for the most part deserters, or prisoners, from the Red Army, who had been reorganised under the command of German officers. There was reason to believe that they had only joined the Germans reluctantly, or for purely mercenary reasons; and we thought it likely that they would welcome a chance to change sides again and

*[i.e. as described in paragraph above --Analyst]

"work their passage home". We reckoned, moreover, that they would prove good soldiers for our purpose, for they were descended from the hordes of Tamerlane, and their warlike instincts had been fortified by a thorough training in the Russian and German armies. We had accordingly instructed all missions to seek contact with these Turkomans and stir them up to kill their officers and desert to the guerillas. Hare was already engaged on plans ~~for~~ their subversion in Central Albania, but the first successful approach had been made by Tony Neel.

Neel had paid a surprise call on the Bairaktar of Krasniqi, a Gheg chieftain who maintained independent relations with both British and Germans, and had found him in conference with a German corporal named Brandt. Brandt had been wearing a Turkoman flash on his uniform ; and Neel had at once set to work to induce him to desert with his men. Brandt had shown interest, but they had found it difficult to come to an understanding, for, in the absence of a suitable interpreter, they could only communicate in broken Italian and sign language. Brandt had agreed, however, to come and talk matters over with us, and had brought with him two sample Turkomans — Tajiks [1] from the high Pamirs, and both fine-looking men.

I spent much of the night talking to Brandt and trying to decide whether the man was genuine in his wish to change sides and what might be his motives. He claimed to be a German Balt, whose family had lived in Russia before the revolution and had then retired to Esthonia. By profession he was an entomologist, and had travelled in Persia and Afghanistan before the war in search of butterflies. He had fled to Germany at the time of the Russian occupation of the Baltic States, and had been conscripted into the German army. There he had attracted attention by his knowledge of Turki and Persian, and had been employed as interpreter to the German Mission sent to Afghanistan to work with the Fakir of come for an all-out effort against the Germans ; at the same time we stressed that we could only send him arms in proportion to the scale of the actions which he undertook. In reply he spoke of the advantages of building up a reserve of weapons before taking the offensive, but, seeing that our instructions on this point were binding, said : 669*

---

[1] The Tajiks are, of course, of Iranian and not Turki stock. The German army, however, classified all Central Asian volunteers as "Turkoman", and, for the sake of convenience, I have held throughout to this classification.

" Since first we worked together in 1940 I[1] have regarded myself as a soldier of the Allies. You represent the Allied Commander-in-Chief, and I must obey your orders. I have told you my objections, now I will do my duty ; in ten days from now we will attack the Germans wherever we can. Give me such help as you think right and send me a British officer, trained in sabotage. I promise you that he will have work enough ! " [648]

Such complete and unconditional agreement surpassed our wildest hopes and we at once announced that we would attach a British officer to Gani's forces. Our choice fell naturally on Simcox, for he was trained in sabotage and already had experience of conditions north of the Drin. Maclean accordingly sent him that same afternoon to Riddle's base to collect such arms and explosives as he could, and then to join Gani with them. Gani welcomed our decision and in return invited us to take his brother, Said, with us to help in our negotiations with Abas Kupi.

" Let him be the pledge of my good faith," he said. He then addressed the assembled chiefs, explaining the terms of our agreement, and adding : " I put my trust in Great Britain, but my efforts alone will not be enough. If Albania is to be saved you must all play your part."

They shook their heads, a disconcerting gesture which, among the Albanians, signifies approval. We saw, however, that they would take no risks until they knew that our alliance with Gani had borne fruit. Each agreed in principle to fight, but, as old Salimani put it :

" First you must send us arms and then the other thing." And here he rubbed his thumb against his forefinger and rolled his eyes.

[1] [Gani Kryeziu, famous Gheg chieftain -- Analyst]

IV

CROSS-ROADS

000

> It is an entertaining pursuit to speculate upon the subtleties of legal theory or to trace from age to age the transmission of the perennial maxims of political wisdom; it is more instructive to discover, in any time and under any system of government, the identity of the agents and ministers of power. That task has all too often been ignored or evaded.
>
> RONALD SYME: *The Roman Revolution* (Chapter XXII)

1

*669
648

Six weeks had passed since we had jumped into Albania; six weeks in which we had repaired the shattered network of British Missions and seen for ourselves how matters stood among the Ghegs. Meanwhile the war, the mighty complex of interlocking human struggles, of which ours was but one, had entered on a new phase. British and American troops had landed in France; Rome had fallen; and to the East, between the Black and Baltic seas, the Red armies rolled inexorably forward, now, for the first time, carrying the battle beyond the boundaries of Russia. The final assault on Hitler's "Fortress Europe" had begun; and, as the fate of the occupied countries was once more committed to the chances of battle, the Eastern Question returned to the fore. The telegrams waiting for us at base warned us that the German garrisons in the Balkans might soon be withdrawn to defend the Reich itself. They also informed us that Partisan troops were marching slowly northwards, breathing death and destruction to Abas Kupi and "the reactionary *Bairaktars*". The time had therefore come to make an end of reconnaissance and to draw up a final plan of action. Our talks with Abas Kupi were accordingly postponed till the following day, and we held a council of war among ourselves. There we took stock of what we had learned, 669+ and sought to impose a definite pattern on the many projects 648 we had so often revolved on the march, or discussed around the hearth at night. Our[1] first aim from the beginning had been 725 to raise the Ghegs against the Germans, both with the laudable object of killing our enemies wherever and whenever possible, and, above all, so as to disrupt their overland communications: the main road from Tirana to Scutari and its lateral links with [491] Macedonia — the roads from Tirana to Dibra and from Scutari to Kukes and Prizren. These roads were important targets; for the German troops in Albania depended upon them for their communications with the Reich, and they also afforded the second of the two lines of retreat open to the enemy's garrisons in Greece.

The thinkers who inspire, and the historians who record, 000 the course of revolutions tend naturally to dwell on those ideological issues which lend them their distinctive character. In the making, however, they more often appear to the revolutionary, as wars do to the strategist, in terms of power and technique. The first object, therefore, of our reconnaissances had been to discover what was the distribution of power in North Albania.

The strongest force in the land was still the German army, [727] but the roots of its strength were abroad, and our journeys 619 had shown us that its influence was on the wane. Among the Ghegs power lay in the armed might and resources of the tribes, and, to a much smaller extent, in the wealth of the merchants and the landowners of the plain. The strength of the tribes was sapped by their disunity and was never canalised into any higher unit of organisation than the tribe itself. Nevertheless, geographical barriers tended to separate the tribes into distinct regional groups; and, within one or more such groups, they were sometimes brought together by a man pre-eminent among them by his personal ability, family tradition, or wealth. Such a leader enjoyed influence rather than authority; for his following was never more than a loose, voluntary, and shifting confederacy of tribes and parts of tribes, intolerant of any form of discipline. These confederacies were none the less the

[1] [British underground liaison officers--Analyst]

*669 had for some time been receiving military supplies from the
[619] British and would thus be well equipped with mortars and automatic weapons. They were convinced, moreover, that, if Enver Hoja should fail to conquer the North by his own efforts, he could always count on the help of Marshal Tito, and, in the last instance, of Soviet Russia itself.

*669 The knowledge that their rivals enjoyed foreign support
648 admonished the Ghegs of their own isolation, and they rightly concluded that their only hope of escaping destruction lay in securing foreign backing for themselves. Seeing that the Partisans were inspired by the Russians and armed by the British, the first reaction of many among them had been to turn to the Germans for help. This, indeed, was the policy pursued by Jon Marko Joni and by Fikri Dine, who sought, though somewhat half-heartedly, to crush the L.N.C. with levies equipped and supported by the Germans. Neither of these leaders any longer believed in a German victory, but they hoped to use the German army to suppress the social revolution before the Allies came. Their policy, however, was openly condemned by Gani Kryeziu and later by Abas Kupi, who both recognised that its success was improbable and that its failure must be disastrous. They held instead that it was only by obtaining British support that the Ghegs might be saved and that they must therefore do all in their power to comply with British demands. These leaders understood, if they did not always approve, our motives in supporting the L.N.C., but they could not believe that a British government would ever allow a Communist, and therefore Russian-controlled, regime to be set up at the entrance to the Adriatic. There were thus two schools of thought among the Gheg leaders as to how best to meet the danger of Communism.

Anglophiles and " collaborationists " publicly accused each other of betraying their common interests, but the line of distinction between them was often blurred and fluctuating. The Anglophiles could scarcely regret the losses which the " collaborationists " inflicted on the L.N.C.; and the " collaborationists ", for their part, regarded the Anglophiles as exponents of an alternative, rather than a contrary, policy to

*669 48 which they too might rally if their own efforts should meet with failure. The gulf between them was further narrowed by the growing uncertainty with which they regarded their own policies. The "collaborationists" on the one hand doubted whether the Germans had ever intended to suppress a conflict which diverted Albanian energies into fratricidal channels. The Anglophiles on the other balanced uneasily between extremes of hope and fear: hope that the British would support them as they did General Zervas; fear that they would be abandoned like General Mihailovitch.

At the time of our landing in Albania, Gheg opinion had still been not unevenly divided between these two schools of thought; and we had been impressed by the number of people who expected or hoped for a separate peace between England and Germany. The growing weakness of the Germans, however, had inclined the chiefs increasingly towards us; and we had seen that even Jon Marko Joni thought of changing sides. This was our opportunity; for now that the Gheg leaders recognised that without our help their cause was doomed, they must be prepared to accept our terms. There was thus good reason to believe that they might soon be brought to battle.

000 Having thus analysed the rifle power of the Ghegs and the motives which might lead them to fight, we had next to consider what form of warfare they might be capable of waging. This called for some enquiry into the fundamental principles of revolt — a branch of the military art on which the text-books of the Staff College offered but little guidance. Our masters had been Lawrence and Wingate: from Wingate we had learned the theory of the "striking force"; from Lawrence much about example and the use of gold. Neither, however, had encountered the curious dichotomy of revolt which faced us in Albania and which was the cause of so much confusion at Headquarters. Lawrence, indeed, had written that "revolt was more like peace than like war", but this had only been to state the problem. War and revolt were both extensions of politics; but it seemed to us that revolt was really war in reverse — the process whereby the vertical relationship between

665 stiffened by a handful of German deserters and fugitives from [625] the labour gangs of the Todt Organisation. We had not previously met Jemal, for his relations with Abas Kupi were strained, and he had for some time been sulking in his tent. We knew, however, that he was in daily contact with Tirana and were anxious to enlist his support in disrupting the political manœuvres of the Germans.

[622] He[1] entertained us to lunch in the house of a village *hoja* and supplemented the usual hospitality of the mountains with highly spiced Yugoslav dishes specially prepared for us by his Bosnian mistress. In appearance he was a cross between Mussolini and Mephistopheles, with a powerful cast of face, ruthless yet somehow mask-like, malicious, and smooth. His violent temperament was curbed by iron self-control and disguised by an elaborate courtesy which might have seemed unctuous but for a hint of arrogance. In conversation he damned Abas Kupi with faint praise, seeking to drive a wedge between us and suggesting that we should send him supplies as an independent leader. We turned a guarded answer, but prevailed on him to send an urgent message to Fikri Dine, advising him to decline Neubacher's invitation to form a government.

000 In the afternoon Hare left for Shupal to persuade Abas Kupi to send a similar warning to Fikri. Meanwhile Maclean and I pressed across the valley and reached Bastar about midnight, only to find that Smiley had moved the camp. We therefore rode out along the range and, at 2 A.M., came on the new base, situated by the side of a gurgling stream on the edge of a broad, level clearing in the forest. We roused Smiley from his slumbers and when at last the flow of his curses had subsided he told us that he had good news: Headquarters had telegraphed approving the terms of our agreement with Abas Kupi. Now at last the revolt might begin.

5

[illegible] NEXT morning, the last of June, we reviewed our situation
648 and judged it satisfactory. Headquarters had already ratified

---

[1] [i.e. Jemal Herri, former chief of Zogist secret police -- Analyst]

our agreement with Abas Kupi; they now signalled that six 669*
'plane-loads of war material had been earmarked for our 648
Mission and were assembled in the hangars of the airfield at Brindisi. Meanwhile Merret had reported that the rear base had been set up in the mountains of Murait, to the east of Matsukull, and that he was standing by to receive air sorties. There was also a letter from Simcox confirming from personal experience that Gani Kryeziu's forces were in action against the Germans and requesting that we should reinforce him with another British officer and a wireless set. In five days' time we were due to meet the assembled Gheg leaders in the Plain of Lura, and now that Gani's example was seconded by our agreement with Abas Kupi we might look forward with confidence to the outcome of this meeting. Events seemed to be moving according to plan and we might hope that, within a few weeks, perhaps even a few days, the Ghegs would be up in arms.

Our immediate task was to decide the line we should adopt at the Lura meeting and we were thus engaged when Hare rode into camp from Shupal. We shouted to him the good news that our agreement with Abas Kupi had been approved, but he laughed ironically and called back:

"Too late! It looks as if he's had it."

He walked over to where we sat and explained that the First Partisan Division had driven the Zogists out of Shengyerg that night and had occupied the valley as far as Derye. Abas Kupi was concentrating his forces in Shupal and had sent warning to the Partisan commander that he would resist any attempt to penetrate further into his territory.

This news spelled the ruin of our hopes; civil war now 000
seemed inevitable; nor was it any longer in our power to avert the tragedy. We had persuaded Abas Kupi to offer negotiation with the L.N.C.; we had brought him to attack the Gyoles bridge; we had agreed together the conditions on which he could take the field. Our part was done; and now only the Supreme Allied Command, or the hand of God, might still restrain Enver Hoja. These sombre reflections were still further darkened by forebodings of what lay ahead. Once

000 they knew what was afoot! I stopped and cursed myself for a fool: this resentment was puerile. No doubt the Partisans were the aggressors, but if their roles had been reversed Abas Kupi would have acted in much the same way as Enver Hoja. Appeals to justice and honour were notoriously the prerogative of the weaker side; and it was sheer sentimentalism to expect that the comradeship born in the hour of mortal danger should survive the approach of victory. The war had been a struggle for power and so would be the peace; and in Albania these things were settled by the sword. But if I could stifle my indignation I could not suppress my shame that the British Empire should be worsted in the game of power politics and its influence shot away with the very rifles and bullets we had ourselves provided.

*669 (148 The night brought no news, and in the morning Hare set out for Shengyerg to meet the Partisan leaders. We were due in Lura in three days, and it was time to decide what we should say to the Gheg chiefs. Our first instinct had been to cancel the meeting, lest the Partisans should consider it a provocation. On second thoughts, however, we decided that we should gain no credit from Enver Hoja for such a gesture of appeasement, while it was just possible that, if the Gheg leaders showed themselves united, he might hesitate to strike. Besides, we felt that it would be unworthy of us as British representatives to call off a meeting which we ourselves had summoned, in the faint hope of placating allies whom we could not control. If we had to break with Abas Kupi or any of the other Gheg leaders it were better that it should be done in public. We decided, therefore, to go ahead with the meeting and accordingly made arrangements to leave for Lura in the afternoon. In spite of the threat to his regions Abas Kupi agreed to come with us; and we were glad of the pretext for removing him from the scene of trouble.

That afternoon, when the mules had been saddled and the advance guard was already on the move, our wireless operator suddenly reported reception of a most urgent telegram. We called a halt and waited anxiously while it was deciphered. It was very short, stated categorically that no further supplies would be sent to the Partisans if they attacked the Zogists, and instructed us to find out what were now Abas Kupi's conditions for coming to terms with them. Our spirits rose at once; for this could only mean that our Headquarters had decided to intervene in Abas Kupi's favour, and that they were not prepared to lend themselves to a manœuvre which must subvert alike our military aims and our political interests in Albania. 669* 648

We consulted briefly with the Agha and telegraphed back to Headquarters that he remained ready to meet the Partisan leaders on two conditions. The first was that a British officer should be present throughout the conversations, so that we might see for ourselves which of the two parties was responsible if the talks ended in deadlock. The second was that the Partisans should recognise the Zogists as an independent movement. No definite proposals for agreement could be advanced until preliminary discussions had taken place, but we were convinced that Abas Kupi was genuinely anxious to come to terms with the Partisans. We suggested, however, that, if our Headquarters seriously contemplated promoting negotiations between the two parties, it would be wise to obtain suitable instructions for Abas Kupi from King Zog.

The business of deciphering the telegram from Headquarters and of enciphering and transmitting our reply had taken some considerable time. It was thus already late when Maclean, Smiley, and I set out with Said and a small bodyguard to catch up with Abas Kupi, who had gone ahead with the main body. Darkness overtook us as we crossed the range, but about midnight we found the Agha and his staff in the village of Gurre Madhe, on the south-western confines of Mati. There we stayed the night. 000

Next morning we set out to cross the Mati valley and in the full heat of the noon came to the river ford. The sun was scorching; the air still and laden with dust kicked up by the long line of marching men. Just above the ford was a deep pool, and with one accord the guerillas stripped and plunged into its ice-cool waters. We swam and sun-bathed for perhaps

wild man ran back into the woods. Presently a messenger 000
arrived from Merret's camp and handed Maclean a telegram.[1] 669* --
He read it and passed it to me. It was sent from Headquarters 648 ●
and told us that a Major Smith would be dropped to us that night with proposals for effecting a reconciliation between the L.N.C. and the Zogists.

" The plot is just about ripe for a *deus ex machina*," Maclean remarked drily.

We told the leaders the news, and their spirits rose at once at the prospect of this dramatic, last-minute intervention. They had never quite believed that we would abandon them, and now they were convinced that the Smith Mission would soon put the Partisans in their place. All agreed to stay with us that night to hear what Smith might have to propose, and we therefore moved off in a body towards our base. There the thoughtful Merret had prepared an excellent dinner in honour of our guests, including trout dynamited in a near-by stream and four bottles of Italian champagne, procured in Dibra by his courier. The grim mood went from us, and the evening was enlivened by Abas Kupi's tales of his youthful exploits and Muharrem's more dubious reminiscences of the lighter side of exile in Paris. The most extravagant story of the evening was produced by Said Kryeziu. It concerned the disreputable activities of a great-uncle who, to escape from his creditors, his blood enemies, and the Turkish police, had solemnly committed suicide by drinking six bottles of brandy on end.

We lit the signal fires at midnight, and, by the light of the moon, saw the aeroplane almost as soon as we heard the drone of its engines. It circled once over the camp, then flew straight across the fires. Two parachutes opened and Smith and his operator swung down to earth. They landed safely, and, when they had extricated themselves from their harness and the embraces of the guerillas, we led them back to the camp fire for a hot drink.

Smith proved to be a solid young man with a shock of fair hair and a jutting chin. His manner was decidedly brisk and he looked very boyish, dressed in shorts and a thick pullover. He had been for some months a liaison officer with the L.N.C.

[1] [Following the Partisan seizure of Zogist Hqs. at Shupal--Analyst]

and had only been evacuated from South Albania a few days before. From what he told us he was on excellent terms with most of the Partisan leaders, and he seemed to be well enough informed of the situation in the regions they controlled. His instructions were to propose an immediate armistice between the Zogists and the L.N.C., and to invite both sides to send delegates to Bari to confer with representatives of the Supreme Allied Commander.

" There," so he said, " we can knock their heads together and make them see sense."

He seemed uncertain exactly how the latter process was to be achieved, but brushed aside our suggestion that the Partisans were acting only too sensibly from their own point of view. At first sight it all seemed a trifle amateurish, but his instructions were confirmed in writing over the signature of Air-Marshal Elliot, and he told us that a reconciliation had just been achieved between General Zervas and the E.A.M. on similar lines. We concluded, therefore, that our Headquarters had decided to adopt a firmer attitude in dealing with the Partisans; and, since failure must be disastrous to British prestige in Albania, we presumed that they were prepared if necessary to enforce the solution which Smith was to propose.

In the morning Smith showed Abas Kupi his credentials in the form of a letter of recommendation from the Air-Marshal, and explained to him his proposals. The Agha at once agreed to the suggestion of an armistice and, after a moment's discussion with Said, accepted the invitation to a conference in Bari with the Partisan leaders. He offered to go there himself and asked that he might take with him two other delegates, one of whom would be Said. This choice was most welcome to us; for we knew that Said was a personal friend of many of the Partisan leaders and was genuinely anxious to come to terms with them. He was empowered, moreover, to represent his brother, Gani, and Muharrem Bairaktar, and so might also conclude agreements with the L.N.C. on their behalf.

cop. Thus, in less than half an hour, Smith had secured Abas Kupi's assent to his proposals and had completed half of his mission. Our business was concluded; the Agha bade us

*669 looking back, we observed tall pillars of smoke, shot with flame, rising from the far side of the valley. We trained our glasses on them and saw that several houses were on fire in the villages of Patin and Kurdari. Among them were the homes of our good friends Yussuf Chelai and of Dule Allemani, whose hospitality we had enjoyed only the night before. The Partisans were burning down the strongholds of the Mati *Beys*.

[648] We had hitherto somewhat innocently assumed that, as Allied officers, we should be allowed, and might even be obliged, to move freely between the contending parties to the civil war. Smith, however, now casually remarked that our Headquarters had accepted Enver Hoja's proposal that the Partisans should take any British officers they might " meet " in Zogist territory under their " protection ". No word of this invidious agreement had reached us in our telegrams; and we stopped in our tracks, cursing the staff officers in Bari for their neglect of duty and Smith for his unseasonable reticence. Our base was less than two hours' march away, and for all we knew might already be occupied by the Partisans. We saw at once that our first care must be to avoid falling into their hands, since our capture would deprive Headquarters of all contact with Abas Kupi and might thus prove fatal to the success of the Smith Mission. Our first instinct was to turn back towards the valley, but night was already falling, and we were uncertain where the Partisans had halted. We stopped, therefore, in a lonely house on the side of the mountain, and despatched a messenger to reconnoitre the situation at our base and summon Hare to join us if he were still free.

The night was undisturbed, but our scout returned early next morning with bad news. The Partisans had been in possession of our base for two days; Hare had ordered his guards not to resist, and had been marched off with his wireless operator to the L.N.C. headquarters. Our kit and stores had been looted, our wireless set and war-chest removed. The poor man wept with indignation as he told his tale and finally burst out:

" But you don't yet know the worst. The Zogist guards

Germans; and the younger boy gave us a graphic description of a raid in which he had wounded a German corporal in the stomach and "finished him off" by shooting out his eyes at point-blank range. 669*

I was spellbound by the child's detailed and exultant account of how he had killed the grown man: an awful example of the Nemesis which by many and devious ways was everywhere overtaking the German conquerors of Europe. At the time I applauded the deed, in part perhaps *pour encourager les autres*; but the tribesmen, more human in that their values were solely individual, shook their heads and condemned the Partisans for dragging children into a struggle which they could not understand. Abas Kupi talked kindly to the two boys and, after keeping them for a day with his bodyguard, arranged to send them back to their homes. The recruiting of children for war or revolution will be variously admired or deplored; the fact remains that the enthusiasm and devotion of such boys — and there were many of them in the ranks of the Partisans — were of no small account in deciding the success of the Albanian revolution. 000

We had some talk with Abas Kupi before he began the advance into Mati, and referred to his recent understanding with Fikri Dine and Mustafa Kruya, brutally reminding him of the fatal results that would attend any similar accommodation with the Germans. He sullenly denied any act, or even thought, of "collaboration" with the enemy, and countered our charges with the accusation that we were again dropping supplies to the Partisans. This we rejected as impossible; for our Headquarters had informed us, and Smith had confirmed, that no arms would be dropped to either side so long as the civil war continued. The tone of the conversation became increasingly unfriendly; and the exchange of accusations only served to reveal the mistrust which had invaded our relations. We knew, however, that our Headquarters were gravely concerned by the news that German troops had appeared in Mati, and by the reports of Abas Kupi's "collaboration" which they were continually receiving from the Partisans. We 669* 648

*669 believed, therefore, that it was only by speaking our minds with ● 648 perhaps exaggerated bluntness that we could hope to offset the pressure from Tirana and so keep the Agha to the straight and narrow path. In the event our efforts were rewarded; and before he left for Mati Abas Kupi undertook not to pursue the Partisans beyond his regions.

Our immediate aim was still to bring Abas Kupi and Said Kryeziu to Bari to meet our staff officers and the newly appointed Partisan delegates. Enver Hoja indeed still refused to agree to negotiations, but it seemed just possible that he might prove more willing to come to terms if Abas Kupi now defeated the Partisans in Mati. Our task meanwhile was to overcome the physical obstacles which stood in the way of his journey to Italy. This must be made by air or sea; and, while our sub-missions were instructed to reconnoitre possible landing grounds for aircraft, Smiley went down to the coast in search of a suitable embarkation point.

000 Davis, our wireless operator, now reported the breakdown in a vital part of the engine with which the batteries of our transmitter were charged. Our communications with Italy were thus threatened with early interruption; and Maclean accordingly left with Said for a village near Tirana to try and arrange for the necessary repairs. Meanwhile I was to remain with Abas Kupi and observe the course of his offensive against the Partisans.

I spent the 21st July in Bastar, for I was feverish and my throat swollen. There, towards evening, I heard the news of the attempt on Hitler's life — an incident which was sure to impress the Albanians and which I at once reported to Abas Kupi as evidence that the end was near. Next day brought *669 little improvement in my condition and, learning that the Zogist troops were not even in contact with the Partisans, I determined to delay my departure till the following morning. That same afternoon, however, I was awakened from a troubled sleep to learn that the Partisans had launched a counter-attack from Shengyerg and were less than an hour's march away. Still weak with fever, and riding a very old, white horse, I made

*669 opinions had always been divided as to the merits of the Smith Mission: Abas Kupi was suspected of "collaboration"; and it was argued that, although the Partisans were engaged in civil war, they none the less continued, if somewhat infrequently, to fight the Germans. This view was fortified by constant appeals for arms from the British liaison officers with the Partisans; each of whom was primarily concerned, and naturally so, with making a success of his particular mission. The policy of mediation was thus rapidly undermined; and, within a fortnight of Smith's arrival in Albania, the Partisans *669 were once more receiving regular supplies of arms. These 648 were dropped, among other units, to the Partisans in Mati, who were thus reinforced with British weapons at the height of their operations against the Zogists.

No word of this important decision had reached us at the time, and we had vigorously denied Abas Kupi's accusations that supplies were again being dropped to the Partisans. Now, more than a fortnight after the event, and in reply to our own pressing enquiries, our Headquarters admitted the facts. The Agha's charges were thus shown to have been well founded, and we reflected bitterly that our innocent denial of them might cause our own good faith to be called into question. Still more discouraging was the knowledge that Headquarters had gone back on their word without explanation and were abandoning the policy of mediation so dramatically initiated by Smith. It was not for us, as a Mission in the field, to complain of changes of policy; and we could only protest at the failure to keep us informed of a decision which touched us so closely. We saw, however, from their replies that, in departing from the terms of the Smith proposals, our Headquarters had not adopted a new policy, but were merely drifting before events which, in this context, meant the pressure of the Partisans. We decided, therefore, to make a last bid to save the situation by putting alternative but definite policies before them, in the hope that these might at least serve to clear their minds.

We urged them to stand by the Smith proposals, stressing that there was still time to stop the civil war if only they were prepared to bring the necessary pressure to bear on Enver

Hoja. This would involve the cutting off of all supplies to the 669* Partisans and of all propaganda in their favour, and at least the 648 ● threat of an eventual British occupation. This, we were convinced, was the policy which would best promote our military, as well as our political, interests. At the same time, if such a policy was no longer practicable, then it would only remain for us to transfer our entire support to the Partisans. If we were to decide on such a course, then we must invite Abas Kupi to take refuge in Italy, since we could not, without loss of prestige, allow the destruction of a man with whom we had been so closely identified. We should also have to encourage such Nationalist leaders as Gani Kryeziu, or Muharrem Bairaktar, to join the L.N.C. while they might still hope to obtain favourable terms of admission. Such a policy was necessarily one of appeasement and would imply the relegation of Albania to the Soviet sphere of influence. It might, however, limit the extent of the civil war, and would enable us to cut our losses with the least dishonour.

Rather to our surprise, Headquarters agreed that these alternative policies represented the only courses of action still open to us. They lacked authority, however, to decide which of the two should be adopted, and therefore signalled back that they were referring the whole question to London for settlement. We received this news with dismay, for prompt action was the essence of either policy. At any moment Enver Hoja might overpower the Zogists; and their defeat would rule out the adoption of the former course and deprive us of any credit we might have gained from the latter. As a Mission, however, we had exhausted the possibilities of intervention, and could now only wait for instructions and upon events.

Under the circumstances, we judged that our presence at 000 Zogist headquarters could only be a source of mutual embarrassment, both to Abas Kupi and to ourselves. We could not explain away the fact that arms were again being dropped to the Partisans; nor could we any longer pretend that our Headquarters were working to end the civil war. There was little, therefore, that we could achieve by meeting, and, though we

At the beginning of the civil war our rear base at Murait 000
had been overrun by the Germans. We knew that some of its personnel had found refuge with the Partisans, but had remained without news of Merret and Sergeants Jones and Jenkins. We had begun to fear that they must have perished, or been taken prisoner, when, at the beginning of August, Merret walked into our camp, followed next day by the two sergeants and a crowd of Italian camp-followers. Merret now told us that their base had been overrun by the Germans and Partisans in turn. Caught between these two fires they had withdrawn into the forests of Lura, where they had eked out a precarious and frugal existence until the retreat of the Partisans had enabled them to join the Zogist forces near Matsukull. Save for Sergeant Jones, who was suffering from a bad bout of malaria, they seemed none the worse for their experience; and Merret now set out to make a close reconnaissance of Tirana airfield.

We remained a fortnight encamped beneath the olive trees, 667*
waiting for instructions from Headquarters and revolving 648 ●
plans for our uncertain future. A few political leaders came out to see us from Tirana, all imploring British intervention to end the civil war. We heard them patiently, but turned guarded answers, for we were now as ignorant of British intentions as they. Among other visitors came Kiamil, the [622]
headman of Derye, who had sheltered Hare and Seymour through the winter. Kiamil had sought to remain neutral during the civil war, but the Partisans could not forgive his close association with the British and had burnt down his house and carried off his cattle — in all some two hundred sheep and eight cows. Robbed of all his substance, he was on his way to Tirana to seek the hospitality of a merchant whom he had once befriended. We could only hope that this earlier act of kindness would be better rewarded than had been his service to the Allied cause.

Each day brought its visits, and much time was spent in 000
the questioning of couriers and spies. Meanwhile kind sympathisers brought us French and Italian books from Tirana to

the reverse slopes of the Kruya mountains, and the Germans, who guarded the city and the main road. He was thus shorn of more than half of his fighting strength; and the prestige of his movement was undermined, on the one hand by his failure to obtain British support, and on the other by his refusal to come to terms with the Germans. He still remained the most powerful of the Nationalist leaders, and still had funds enough to keep his forces on a war footing for some weeks. All knew, however, that, unless he could win outside support, he was doomed; and now, for the first time, his authority was challenged by discontented elements within the Zogist movement. These blamed his hesitations as the cause of their disasters and looked to Jemal Herri for a lead. 669*

At the height of this crisis in his affairs,[1] Abas Kupi came to our "hide-out" in the swamp to tell us how matters stood and to seek our help. He sat down on Smiley's sleeping-bag and, using Said as interpreter, told us of his defeat in quiet tones but with brutal frankness. He spoke with biting sarcasm of the defection of the men of Mati, and scornfully contrasted Jemal Herri's feverish intrigues with his military unpreparedness. For the first time, too, he commended the skill and persistence of his opponents and showed that he was under no illusion as to their strength. He then appealed for British help, recalling his past services to the Allied cause and representing that his defeat must also be ours. For a moment we were at a loss for a reply; and, seeing us hesitate, he exclaimed: [648]●

"If you can't help me to reach an understanding with the Communists, then only the Fascists can help me to defend myself against them."

We urged the folly of committing himself to a defeated cause, especially when British policy was still undecided. His situation might be critical; it was not yet hopeless; and the continued presence of our Mission showed that we had not yet abandoned him. We were not in a position to give him official advice, for we were still in the dark as to our government's instructions. Our personal opinion, however, was that he should keep his hands clean of all stain of "collaboration"

[1] [i.e. in mid-August, 1944. Cf. Cat. nb, pp. 242-243.--Analyst]

*669
643
701

British support were more likely of fulfilment than those which they had once founded upon the Germans. They asked, therefore, for assurances that the British command would support their operations with military supplies, and would view their defection to the Allied cause with favour. If the Agha could obtain such assurances from the British Mission they would accept his proposal, and he might count on them as on his own men.

*669
648

As soon as Fikri and the General were gone, Abas Kupi despatched a messenger to summon us to an urgent meeting. Accordingly we set out in Ihsan's carriage on the following evening, and, driving through the night along dusty cart tracks, reached the lonely farm-house where the Agha slept. The hour was too late for discussions, but next morning we went out together to a cool and shaded apple orchard where the master of the house had spread bright-coloured rugs for our conference. There Abas Kupi told us of his meeting with the " collaborationist " leaders and declared himself ready, despite the civil war, to attack the Germans as soon as we should give the assurances which Fikri had required. His proposal corresponded closely to our own most sanguine expectations, but we heard him with affected reserve; for we could not tell what would be the reactions of the staff officers in Bari. We saw, however, that the Agha himself was excited by the prospect of action, and to allay his impatience at once drew up a report for our Headquarters which was enciphered and transmitted in his presence. In this we admitted that British encouragement for the projected concentration of Nationalists under Abas Kupi's command might feed fuel to the flames of civil war. At the same time we were sure that it would contribute to the discomfiture of the Germans, who might otherwise make good their retreat through North Albania with little loss. We also pointed out that the entry of the Nationalists into the war against Germany would provide us with a last opportunity for intervening to stop the civil war and to prevent the incorporation of Albania in the Soviet system.

000

When our business was done and we had eaten we left the orchard and went our several ways: Abas Kupi to Kurbenesh to negotiate alliances with its chiefs; Ihsan to Tirana to keep

in touch with the political leaders; and Maclean to Vorre to 000
reconnoitre the German ammunition dumps. I prepared meanwhile to return with Davis to Mukai, but our departure was delayed by the discovery that our mules had been stolen. Towards evening, however, I managed to borrow substitutes, and, loading the wireless set and batteries on one of these, joined Smiley and Said in the small hours of 21st August. Maclean returned next day; but our hopes of rest were intercepted by the intelligence of a Partisan advance, and we moved, therefore, into the neighbourhood of Kruya. It was quite a short march but agonizing for Said, who was stricken by a sharp attack of malaria. The poor fellow, indeed, was so ill that he had to be supported in the saddle; and that evening, alarmed by his condition, we sent into Kruya for a doctor.

The city of Skanderbeg could boast of only two physicians, 759
and the first of these declined our courier's invitation for fear of the Germans. The second, however, accepted without hesitation, saying that at his age he was afraid of no one. He [165]
was, indeed, a hundred and eight years old, but sat his horse like a young man and made light of a two hours' ride through the mountains. His drooping, tobacco-stained moustache suggested that abstinence was not the secret of his longevity; and at lunch, when he ate meat and drank wine with the rest of us, he told us that he had been married five times. The old mountaineer obviously enjoyed the adventure and told us that he was glad to be able to help the enemies of the Germans. Despite his years, the desire for revenge still smouldered in him, and he explained that the Austrians had shot two of his grandsons in the last war. He was delighted, moreover, to attend Said and recalled that, as a medical officer, he had served under one of his ancestors in the Turkish army. He had learnt his medicine in Istanbul in the seventies of the last century, and was ignorant of later developments in the art of healing. Nevertheless his potions revived Said, and he successfully relieved minor ailments in others of our party.

Meanwhile, throughout the Balkans, the revolution of 669*
events proceeded with ever-increasing momentum. On 24th 648

*669
648

August Roumania declared against the Germans; and on the following day Bulgaria sued for an armistice. In two days Hitler's empire had been stripped of two of its provinces; and, by a natural process, the news of these defections excited the emulation of the Albanian leaders. On the evening of 26th August Ihsan Toptani arrived in our camp with an urgent message from Nureddin Vlora. This was to tell us that a joint meeting of the leaders of the Government and of the Balli Kombetar had unanimously endorsed Fikri Dine's provisional agreement with Abas Kupi. We reported the news at once to our Headquarters, and late in the night of 27th August received their reply. It authorised us to inform Abas Kupi that, although the British authorities had little confidence in Fikri Dine and his associates, they would be prepared to reconsider their attitude towards these men if they now gave positive proofs of their intention to fight the Germans. The Agha's own good-will had already been acquired by a decision to supply him with arms in proportion to his actions; and we might now expect that this latest instruction would also satisfy the demands of the "collaborationists". That same night, therefore, we despatched a courier to Abas Kupi to arrange for a meeting.

Next day, anticipating his reply, we went down into the plain to another farm of Ihsan Toptani's in the region of Topise. There, in the evening, five men from Abas Kupi's bodyguard came for us and drove us by truck back across the plain in the direction of Kruya. We had covered perhaps ten miles when our driver pulled up beside two Zogist sentries standing by the road. We climbed down from the truck and were directed through the maize fields towards a farm-house. There we found the Agha seated on a log in the orchard, while a score of his guards rested beneath the trees.

We exchanged the customary greetings, and, after we had drunk coffee together, Maclean gave him assurances that we should send him supplies in proportion to his actions, and that we should be prepared to reconsider our attitude towards the "collaborationists" if they now declared against the Germans. Then, convinced that this was the Agha's last chance, he told

him that unless the Zogists attacked the Germans at once, our 669*
Mission would be withdrawn. Stung by this ultimatum and 648
the lack of confidence which it implied, the Agha reminded us sharply of the shortcomings of our own Headquarters. They had failed to secure instructions for him from King Zog; they had failed to take advantage of his offer to meet the Partisan leaders; and they had never fulfilled the agreement we had concluded with him in July for supplying his forces with arms. Worse still, they had refused to give him any assurances for the future of Albania's frontiers, and had deliberately abandoned the policy of mediation between the rival parties to the civil war initiated by the Smith Mission. His arguments were strong, but we declined to discuss what we could not defend, and the Agha grew silent, seeing that we were not to be drawn. For several moments he sat downcast, plucking at the grass, and then, looking up, said quietly:

"I will give your message to Fikri Dine and his friends: let them join me if they will. For my part I have decided to attack Durazzo within three days."

For fully a minute none of us spoke as we turned over in our minds the significance of his words. Durazzo was the chief port and second city of Albania; and it was there that Abas Kupi had first raised the standard of resistance against the Italian invaders. To capture Durazzo now, at the outset of the campaign, would revenge the glorious defeat of 1939 and bring fresh lustre to the Agha's tarnished laurels. It would, moreover, open sea communications with Italy, and might enable us to run in military supplies in bulk and even to obtain the support of a Commando. It still remained to be seen whether the Zogist forces were equal to the enterprise, but we decided to give the attempt every encouragement. Maclean therefore promised our support, and we shook hands with the Agha in token of agreement.

To give practical effect to his resolve, Abas Kupi now issued orders for all available Zogist forces to concentrate in the region of Preza. Then, that his main effort might be promoted by diversions elsewhere, he wrote to his confederates among the Catholic chiefs of the North, bidding them stand by

*669 648 to attack the Germans. Meanwhile, leaving Maclean and myself at Topise, Smiley set out with Zogist guides to reconnoitre the approaches to Durazzo.

643 701 That night, when we had gone, Fikri Dine, General Prenk Previsi, and representatives of the Balli Kombetar drove out from Tirana to the Agha's headquarters to learn of our reply. Their discussions lasted through the night, but before dawn the die was cast. They returned to the capital, and, at noon on the 29th August, Fikri Dine announced the resignation of his government in a proclamation which declared that his efforts to save Albania from Communism had been frustrated by the total absence of German support.

The resignation of the government was the signal for the political leaders to disperse, and completed the isolation of the Germans. They sought to persuade, and at length to compel, the loyalty of their former associates, but when they struck the birds had already flown. Fikri Dine made his way to Dibra, hoping to raise the tribes to his support, but the Partisans were already masters of the region, and the chiefs who had been his friends had gone over to the winning side. For some days he wandered as an outlaw through the lands he had once swayed; but his utmost efforts only rallied to his cause some two hundred men, the remnants of the Dibran gendarmerie. With these he then retired through Mirdita to the Catholic region of Kurbenesh, which lies to the west of Mati. Kurbenesh was the seat of Prenk Previsi's influence, and there Fikri found the general with a body of picked officers and men of the Albanian army. Their combined following was less than five hundred strong — all that remained of the Albanian armed forces.

*669 665 The Ballist leaders meanwhile hesitated to entrust themselves to the Gheg chieftains and went into hiding near, or even in, Tirana, to wait until their forces should arrive from the South. Midhat Frasheri and Ali Klissura were variously reported held or shot by the Germans, but when the smoke of rumour cleared it was found that they were in Shiyak. There Abas Ermenye, the movement's energetic military commander, was concentrating the remnants of the Ballist forces, which presently amounted to some eight hundred men.

had served in Fan Noli's government and had been condemned 665 to death *in absentia* during Zog's regime for participating in a "Communist" conspiracy. He had spent fourteen years of his exile in France, and there had acquired a style of eloquence and point of view which savoured strongly of the Third Republic. In appearance indeed, with his florid complexion, untidy, greying hair and thick horn-rimmed spectacles, he might well have been a protagonist of the Radical Socialist Party.

Ali had returned to Albania when the Italians had driven out King Zog and had resumed his place among the Republican leaders. Later he had become one of the founders of the Balli Kombetar, and had fought with some success in the revolt against the Italians. As an ardent Liberal and Nationalist, however, he cordially detested Communism and was generally supposed to have played a leading part in organising the Ballist effort against the Partisans. Zog had condemned him to death as a Communist; Enver Hoja as a Fascist. The wheel of political fortune has strange turns, but in both cases Ali was absent at the trial.

7

THE Zogist forces had been in action for a fortnight,[1] and 669* Abas Kupi waited with growing concern for the aeroplanes 648● which should bring supplies from Italy. His war-chest was empty, his men were down to their last cartridge, but we knew now that the help which we had promised would never come. Now, just as we had brought the Agha and his confederates back into the struggle, our Headquarters ordered Maclean to return to Bari "to report". Smiley, with Sergeants Jenkins and Jones, our team of saboteurs, were to accompany him. I was to take over command of the Mission, but with express instructions not to urge Abas Kupi to attack the Germans, nor to hold out to him any hope of support if he should. My role was textually defined as that of "a neutral observer", although how a British officer attached to forces actively fighting the Germans could be "neutral" presented a

[1] [autumn, 1944-- Analyst]

*609
648

problem which neither Maclean nor I could ever solve.

These orders sealed the fate of the Zogist movement; for, without supplies, the Agha could not wage war, and without British support he must go down before the Partisans. They also marked the failure of our Mission. With the knowledge and approval of our Headquarters we had promised arms to Abas Kupi if he should fight. He had fought, but now there were to be no arms. We were to go back on our word. The guilt of this betrayal was not ours, but it meant that we should be dishonoured in the eyes of the Albanians; and we felt as if we had been stabbed in the back.

Sober reflection, however, reminded us that a soldier has no right to complain because he feels himself dishonoured by a change of policy. Great issues cannot always be decided over night, and, by an inevitable process, the operations of a military staff are guided by old directives even while new ones are under discussion. So it had been with Albania. When Abas Kupi had announced his decision to fight, our staff officers had still been guided by the directive to send arms to all who attacked the Germans. Policy towards Albania had even then been under review; but an immediate decision had to be taken, and they had therefore given the Agha the assurances which he required. Thus encouraged he had taken the field; but before supplies could be sent there came a change in policy, and it was decided thenceforth to support the Partisans alone. Nor could the clock be put back just because the Agha had attacked the Germans; for, as our instructions showed, that was no longer the real issue in London, any more than in Albania. To explain, however, is not to excuse; and we knew that to support only the Partisans was to surrender Albania to the Russians. They were our allies; but this surrender was none the less a defeat for the British Empire, and the cause of it lay in some defect either of understanding on the part of our statesmen or of vital strength in the imperial body politic. Of this defect our dishonour was a symptom and it was natural that it should hurt us.

Our first reaction had been to contest these orders, but a brief exchange of telegrams with Headquarters convinced us

that their decision was irrevocable. From shame and policy, 669*
however, we still hesitated to tell the Albanians the truth. To 648
have done so indeed might altogether have destroyed Abas Kupi's authority; for, now that he had been driven from his strongholds, his influence rested solely on the presence of our Mission and the hopes of British support which it inspired. We feared, too, that the news of our betrayal might provoke fierce dissensions among the Nationalist leaders and so bring about the common ruin. Time would reveal the position soon enough; and when they pressed us for news of supplies we only answered that we were without instructions.

The Nationalists, indeed, were still full of hope; and, at a 669*
council of war in Malibardhe, Midhat Frasheri expounded an ambitious plan for the creation of an anti-German bloc of all the northern chiefs. The mainstay of such a bloc was to be Jon Marko Joni, who might raise three thousand rifles and could open the vast region of Mirdita to the Nationalists. Midhat's plan was accepted; and that same day Abas Kupi and his confederates marched off to win the Captain of the Mirdites to their cause. They were playing their last card.

Maclean and I stayed on in Malibardhe to wait till the Agha should return. Abas Ermenye meanwhile continued to harass the German retreat with a mixed force of Zogists and Ballists; and Smiley blew up another bridge. The weather remained fine, but the days were drawing in, and the nights were cold. The Turkomans grumbled, for they had only summer uniforms, and two men sold their rifles to buy warm clothes. The rank and file of the Albanians seemed to sense that the end was near, and they no longer even asked when the aeroplanes would come from Italy. Every night, however, they gathered round to hear the wireless, but their despondency only grew as every broadcast poured out propaganda for the Partisans and made no mention of their own struggle. Food supplies, too, began to fail; and every morning we woke to find that another contingent of tribesmen had deserted. The atmosphere was tense and without hope.

At nightfall on the 20th September Abas Kupi returned

793 barn, decorated only by a crude, wooden cross, erected on a bare altar of rough stones. At the door one of the congregation stood guard over the rifles of his fellows, but each of us retained his pistol or his knife.

[771] For the Mirdites, Christianity is, above all, an expression of nationalism; and the elevation of the Host that day appeared to me less as an act of faith than as a gesture of defiance against the foreign invader marching under the banner yesterday of Islam, now of Communism.

4

* 669
648

WHEN Maclean had seen that our Headquarters were inflexibly set on his recall, he had asked that a boat be sent to embark him from the coast between the estuaries of the Mati and the Drin. The staff officers in Bari, however, refused this request and ordered him instead to hand himself over to the Partisans for evacuation through Southern Albania. In explanation they alleged difficulties with the Navy; but, as we suspected at the time and later verified, their real and puerile design was to prove to Enver Hoja that Maclean and Smiley had really been withdrawn. We saw at once that in the eyes of the Albanians Maclean's departure to the camp of the L.N.C. must impose an intolerable humiliation on Abas Kupi. We also feared that Enver Hoja's attitude towards our Mission might make such a journey as dangerous as it would be dishonourable.

We therefore multiplied excuses for delay, making much of the difficulties of travel while the rivers were in spate, and discovering objections to each rendezvous which our Headquarters proposed. Such stratagems served for a time, but orders from Bari grew increasingly peremptory; and Maclean had just decided that he could procrastinate no longer when suddenly an urgent telegram from Headquarters countermanded all previous instructions. As we were later to learn, a commissar had spoken out of turn at the L.N.C. Divisional Headquarters, and the British liaison officers had thus discovered the real intentions of the Partisans. These were to march Maclean and Smiley south as prisoners to show the people Enver Hoja's power. Three days later our Headquarters signalled that the whole Mission would now be withdrawn by sea. 669* 648

The prospect of Italy was welcome, but we knew that we could not leave Albania with honour if we abandoned Abas Kupi to his fate. We could not forget that he had stood by us in the dark days after the fall of France, and, though necessity might now compel us to desert his cause, we resolved at least to save his life. In his hour of need, however, our Headquarters forgot the past, and, to appease the unappeasable, prepared to sacrifice a proven friend. To their eternal dishonour, they informed us that they would not evacuate Abas Kupi, lest such a move should impair their relations with the Partisans.

In the kaleidoscope of politics all alliances and relationships are subject to the eternal laws of change. Interests converge only to separate again; ideologies and principles serve their turn in the unending struggle for power. It is therefore often necessary and — since, in the anarchy of international affairs, necessity is law — legitimate to abandon causes long supported and to dissolve the pledged bonds of alliance; for it is not open to a whole people to be faithful unto death. But it is always wrong to abandon to their fate men who have served us well. We may have to jettison their interest and abjure our support of their movements, but, if we cannot fulfil their hopes, we should leave no stone unturned to save at least their lives. 000

Ashamed of our Headquarters' cowardice, we now resolved not to await a Motor-Torpedo-Boat from Bari but to advise Abas Kupi to charter an Albanian craft in which we might cross to Italy together. We therefore sent Petrit to Preza to warn his father of our situation. Three days later the Agha joined us at Velyes with two hundred men, the last remnant of the Zogist forces. He had marched for twenty-seven hours, fighting two actions against the Germans on the way, and wading through the flooded courses of Mati and Fani. His 669*

8

669*
648

OUR discussions with the authorities in Bari lasted six days, and we already despaired that Abas Kupi would ever reach Italy in his own boat. The last hope of saving his life — if indeed he still lived — was to return ourselves and bring him out; but our Headquarters remained stubbornly opposed to a plan which might strain their relations with Enver Hoja. Our telegram to the Foreign Secretary, however, had not been without effect; and before leaving Italy Mr. Eden had recommended that Abas Kupi should be rescued. His opinion could scarcely be ignored, but our Headquarters nevertheless referred for instructions to the Supreme Command, alleging that, however desirable politically, the Agha's evacuation might have unfavourable military consequences. Maclean was accordingly summoned to Naples to put the case for Abas Kupi before the Supreme Allied Commander, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson.

Maclean flew from Bari on the 3rd November, and I joined him on the following evening in the spacious palace of Caserta, the seat of the Supreme Command. General Wilson had made us his guests; and, as such, we were accommodated in comfortable booths in the precincts of a building where King Bomba had kept his hounds. "The Kennels", as this guest compound was irreverently known, had witnessed many Balkan dramas; and the previous occupants of our beds had been the rival Greek Generals, Zervas and Sarafis, who had just subscribed, and were soon to denounce, an insincere alliance.

That night we dined with Mr. Harold Macmillan, who was at this time Resident Minister-of-State in the Mediterranean area. His intervention might decide the outcome of our visit; and, when the meal was over, we sought to enlist his support for our plans. He heard us impassively, staring straight in front of him from the depths of his armchair, his attention apparently centred on his pipe. Then with the same disconcerting detachment he made himself devil's advocate and raised every possible objection to our arguments. Our answers, however, seemed to accord with his own inner thoughts; and at length he dismissed the subject, saying:

"Of course we must save Abas Kupi. Personally I'd be all for bringing Mihailovitch out as well."

This robust attitude was a welcome contrast to the appeasing climate of Bari, and it was with renewed confidence that we made our way next morning to the Supreme Commander's offices. An orderly directed us to the General's ante-room, where a young A.D.C. was busy on the telephone, arranging an air passage to Cairo for a lady friend's pekinese. He offered us a drink, and, while waiting, showed us the signed photographs of war-time celebrities with which the walls were covered. Presently a group of staff officers emerged from the adjoining room and announced that the General's morning meeting was over. It was now our turn.

The Supreme Allied Commander, or "Jumbo", as the British army knew him, stood in the middle of the room, his bulky person clad in corduroy trousers and a thick, khaki pullover. He welcomed us with fatherly kindness and led us to a corner of the room where half a dozen deep armchairs had been set in a semicircle after the manner of an Arab *majlis*. He sat us down on either side of him and asked us to point out on a map of Albania the dispositions of Germans, Zogists, and Partisans. He followed our explanations closely, peering over narrow, horn-rimmed spectacles, and then began to ply us with curiously disconnected questions, taking rough notes in pencil of points in our replies. Presently he put down his writing-pad and, after a moment's pause, announced:

"Yes, I agree with you, the fellow's been our friend and we must get him out. We'll do it quite openly; and we'll tell Hoja too; but," and here his beady eyes twinkled, "not until your man's safe in Italy."

He then heaved himself out of the armchair, and, walking over to his desk, called down the telephone for his Chief-of-Staff. A moment later we were joined by General Gammel, who was asked to prepare orders for Abas Kupi's rescue. Maclean was put in charge of the operation. We had won.

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Albania EG1

Communism came to this land not because of the abuses 648 of capitalism or because of a yearning of workers to unite, 643 but through a political movement which developed against 175 the background of the World War. The independence of the country and the inviolability of its boundaries were guaranteed by the peace treaties after the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. At the same time the Great Powers held that Italy had a special diplomatic and strategic stake in the welfare of her neighbor across the Adriatic Sea. As a result Italian interests in Albania expanded greatly after 1920, and to every intent and purpose the foreign trade of the two countries was pooled. But Yugoslavia naturally sought to challenge the primacy of Italy in the Adriatic area, and its support is held to have largely made it possible for Ahmed Zogu, Prime Minister in a government constituted as a Regency, to take over the rule of the country during 1924. Shortly thereafter, a Republic was proclaimed, and Zogu was elected President for a term of seven years. A skillful diplomat and political leader, he improved relations with both Greece and Yugoslavia, and signed the Treaty of Tirana in 1926 with Italy. This, accompanied by a sizable grant of financial assistance from Italian banks, gave recognition to the common interest of both countries in maintaining the independence of Albania. A year later they entered a defensive alliance. When it was alleged that these developments conceded to Mussolini rights which he exploited unduly, Zogu curbed the opposition with dramatic swiftness. He proclaimed himself King, on September 1, 1928, and was responsible for a constitution which recognized no political liberties but insured freedom of religion. Zogu, a benevolent dictator, made an honest effort to improve the cultural and economic life of the country, building roads, fostering health and hygiene, erecting schools, fighting a vigorous battle against illiteracy,

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe

Albania EG1

● 648 and modernizing the banking system. Albania even acquired
643 a radio station, and air travel became a reality. The King
175 brought in foreign experts, particularly Austrians. Some of them I have known; and while they had the usual reservations about the political institutions of Albania, they respected his energy and sincerity of social purpose.

648 At this point Mussolini was unfortunately smitten with
175 irrational imperialist ambition: if Hitler could have his empire of the master race, he himself was called upon to reconstruct the dominions of ancient Rome. Italian troops landed in Albania on April 7, 1939, shortly after the fall of France. They quickly overpowered the small defense army, and Zogu had to seek refuge abroad. The crown was thereupon offered to King Victor Emmanuel III, of Italy, who docilely accepted it. It is worth noting that the reception accorded the Italians was not too unfriendly, because some sections of the population expected to profit from the political change. Using Albania as an advance base, the Duce attacked Greece on October 28, 1940; but the valiant Greeks put his armies to rout and occupied nearly half of Albania. The Germans, defeating Yugoslavia, took over the rest of Albania, but confined themselves to routine control. Two resistance movements were formed, the one pro-Zogu and primarily against Italy, and the other Communist with the Germans as its principal target. The second, the National Liberation Front, was the stronger, primarily because it boldly drafted men into its partisan forces and because it maintained ruthless discipline. British commandos in the Adriatic therefore quite naturally aided it. As a result, the Front was able to assume control of
175 the country as soon as the Germans retreated.

648 The provisional government formed by General Enver
642 Hoxha, commander in chief of the National Liberation Front, was recognized by the United States, Great Britain, and Rus-

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Albania EG1

sia in 1945. A republic was established during the following 648
year. General Hoxha and his followers meanwhile made no 175
secret of their devotion to the Communist cause, although their 642
utterances took on the usual protective coloring. At a Congress
in the little town of Permeti, on May 24, 1944, the Front 798
had "guaranteed freedom of religion and of conscience, and 162
equality of rights for all religions." Hoxha's partisans, like
Tito's, were frequently seen at religious services. Albania, a
turbulent and weapon-toting country addicted to blood feuds
and similar practices, was one of the most tolerant of nations
from the religious point of view. In 1930 nearly three-fifths
of the total population of 1,003,000 were Mohammedans,
while the members of the Greek Orthodox Church constituted
another fifth. Catholics in union with Rome were noticeably in
the minority, scarcely more than one-tenth of the professedly
religious reported in the census, and were concentrated in
the extreme north of the country. Their major religious, charitable,
and educational institutions were in Scutari, an ancient
town on a beautiful mountain-surrounded lake, afflicted with
mosquitoes and malarial fever. Ancient ties with Italy, which
Mussolini so wantonly divested of moral and diplomatic import,
had led to the existence of a considerable number of
religious of Italian origin in Albania, and also to the settlement
of many Albanians in Italy. This fact would no doubt
have given rise to some antipathy even under normal conditions.
Yet on the whole few in Albania were apprehensive
when the war ended. The age-old tradition of religious peace
seemed to preclude violent change.

Albania had a rude awakening. General Hoxha was interested 798
in nothing less than freedom of religion. Information
concerning the fate of the Moslem majority is meager and
difficult to come by. But laborious piecing together of news
items from Albanian radio broadcasts and newspapers makes

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe

Albania EG1
Baltic Countries RB1

A.
795
661

in the Soviet Union itself prior to the War against Hitler. They are almost wholly isolated. Information concerning the cultural life of the Albanian people is limited to what can be obtained from broadcasts over the government radio station.

A.
648●
642

Hoxha did not join forces with Marshal Tito when that leader broke with the Kremlin, but was soon made aware that Albania was wholly isolated and that his Yugoslav neighbor gave asylum to dissidents who plotted a *coup d'état.* That such an undertaking might well meet with success seems probable. But Italy retains its interest in the strategic and economic advantages of the Albanian area, and its assent would be required; and currently, with the struggle for Trieste in the foreground, no entente is conceivable. The Russians apparently maintain a small body of troops in the vicinity of Tirana, but have in no other wise manifested great concern. Apparently they consider Hoxha a negligible problem child. It is apparent, however, that the Russian garrison makes impossible any attempt to overthrow the dictatorship from within the country.

II

B
648
175

The fate of the three erstwhile Baltic Republics—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—illustrates the sad truth that in troubled and imperialistic parts of the world it does not pay to be a small nation. Each of the three had a solid folk or tribal core round which language, mores, and religious tradition had developed. For brief periods each managed to acquire a precarious independence. But they lay along the great Baltic seacoast route from Western Europe. German colonization efforts, spearheaded by the Teutonic Knights, went this way, and later came solidly entrenched land barons. There were periods of Swedish and Polish domination. Finally, as a result of the Treaty of Nystad, which in 1721 ended the Swedish

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia

Albania E61

XIX

FROM SUB-SATELLITE TO SATELLITE

> We are linked by unbreakable fraternity and unity with the heroic people of Tito's Jugoslavia, a guarantee of the freedom, the independence and the sovereignty of our—and all—democratic peoples in the Balkan peninsula. This fraternity and this unity ensured our country unselfish and fraternal aid during the war, and now make possible the all-round development of our new life.
>
> Prime Minister Enver Hoxha of Albania, New Year's Eve, 1948

THE diplomatic representatives of the 648 Western nations are harassed in all the satellite states; and since any inquiry of even the most routine sort is called spying, and movement is restricted arbitrarily to specified areas, they occupy themselves mainly with reporting on the local press and complaining to the Foreign Office about the abuse they find heaped on them there. In Tirana, the tiny Albanian capital, they are especially isolated and feel especially frustrated. France and Italy are the only important Western Powers maintaining legations there, and their small staffs are under rigorous surveillance. The lack of official information about Albanian affairs is not compensated for by news in the press, local or foreign. Albanian newspapers are insignificant except as propaganda organs, and even so are few in number and more puerile if possible than those in satellite capitals with some traditions of cosmopolitanism. Foreign journalists, except Communists or fellow-travellers, have been banned from the country since soon after the war. Albania thus is the satellite about which we know the least, and much of what we think we know is rumor or conjecture.

000 which we know the least; and much of what we think we know is rumor or conjecture.

Albanians are accustomed to having the world know little about their affairs, and are even accustomed to the role of satellite--though their national spirit, which exists in spite of the vivacity of their religious and tribal conflicts, forbids one from saying that they are reconciled to it. The last time I was in the country, a good many years ago, Italy and Jugoslavia were contending for predominance. Italy won, expelled King Zog and in 1939 annexed the country. Ciano has recorded the arrival in Rome of the sad-faced group of Albanians summoned to make obeisance to the Duce, lacking only the iron collars of the slaves that used to grace the old imperial triumphs. But after Mussolini was hung up by his heels and Tito was accepted as one of the Allied victors all this was rectified. The new
665 Albanian dictator, Enver Hoxha (pronounced Hodzha), was a
643 Communist guerrilla who had been in contact with the Jugoslav
648 Partisans during the war. Indeed, an emissary from Tito, Miladin Popovich, is credited with having organized the Albanian Communists into a unified party in November 1941. Hoxha was an original member; and Tito's influence over him, dating from that time, endured until the Cominform row broke the Communist world front in 1948. Though Hoxha was never Tito's creature to the extent that the successors to Zog had been Mussolini's, he looked to Jugoslavia from the start for almost everything in the way of practical relief, technical assistance and even funds. From Moscow he received, apart from a small military mission, only remote ideological control and the prestige of enjoying at second hand the patronage which Stalin accorded Tito.

000 While Jugoslavia herself was an obedient satellite this seemed to be satisfactory to Moscow. Soviet enthusiasm for what was being done in Albania was reflected in the Moscow press. Take, for example, this report published in Trud in April 1948 from a special correspondent who had just visited the country:

> In the Democratic Front, a political organization has been created that unites all the forces of the people. . . . Agrarian reform has been effected, putting an end to the feudal system of landownership . . . Industrial enterprises, transportation, communications, etc., in the coun-

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia

Albania EG1

Albania is enclosed by Jugo-

● 648 slavia on two sides, and her only other land neighbor is Greece, a traditional enemy and at present particularly disliked by Communist Albanians because of her "Monarcho-Fascist" government. When Hoxha established his régime at Tirana in November 1944, the Jugoslav Government had been the first to recognize it and establish diplomatic relations. Albania's first and for a time only economic treaty was with Jugoslavia, a customs union was created between the two countries and the Albanian currency was tied to the Jugoslav dinar. Close and continuing political coöperation seemed assured by the pact of friendship which was arranged when Hoxha paid a state visit to Belgrade in June 1946. The reorganization of the Albanian Army was carried out with the help of a Jugoslav military mission. The study of the Serbo-Croat language became compulsory in Albanian schools, Jugoslav and Soviet flags flanked the Albanian flag in schoolrooms, and Tito's and Stalin's photographs flanked those of Hoxha in government offices. To complete the picture, Albania was allowed to play only a secondary rôle in international affairs. This was underscored by the fact that the Soviet Union did not grant her a treaty of guarantee like those made with the other satellites and that the Cominform failed to admit the Albanian Party to membership.

Nevertheless, when Tito's expulsion from the Cominform faced Hoxha with the choice between Belgrade and Moscow he did not hesitate. It was inconceivable to him—as to others—that Stalin would be unable to change the guard at Belgrade if he so desired. C. L. Sulzberger, chief foreign correspondent of *The New York Times,* a connoisseur of things Albanian, suggests that Hoxha may have foreseen how things were going as early as 1947 and that he arranged then to throw in his lot with Moscow.[3] It is true that he did complain in 1947 about the Jugoslav program for Albania to produce raw materials and buy Jugoslav goods in return—a piquant preview of what Tito would say later about Stalin's idea of proper relations between Communist states. Nevertheless, such murmurs of discontent seemed insignificant in comparison with the frequent messages of ebullient friendship that passed back and forth between the two heads of state. In June 1948, however, Hoxha rushed to be

---

[3] *The New York Times,* April 5. 1949.

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia
Albania EG1

648

in at the kill. Perhaps he had chafed secretly under the weight of so much kindness from Belgrade; more likely, his heart was not really in what he was doing and he wished to disarm suspicions by showing especial vehemence against his friend and benefactor. Whatever the reason, Albania was the first of the Communist states to attack Tito openly, and the Albanian press and radio led the way to each new level of intensity in the campaign of invective against him.

Even after Hoxha had seated himself as prominently as possible on the Moscow steamroller he did not feel secure. The technical, commercial and military agents of Tito's "reactionary" régime were gone, the customs union with Jugoslavia had been dissolved, railway and other communications had been cut, oil shipments to Jugoslavia had ceased and Jugoslav imports had been halted. The Russian military and civilian mission (which first arrived in February 1946) had been increased to something between two and five thousand; there was a major-general of the Soviet Army on hand to instruct the Albanian Army; and there was another high officer to supervise the police. But the Soviet Army itself was far away. Albania no longer had direct contact with any Cominform state. The only routes by which Soviet assistance could arrive were by plane from Hungary or Bulgaria over Jugoslav territory, by ship through the Dardanelles and the Aegean, by rail across Austria to the Allied-controlled port of Trieste and then by ship down the Adriatic, or (most roundabout of all, although actually sometimes used) by ship from the Baltic via Gibraltar. The economic situation of the country was deteriorating. There was not enough food. Grain and other supplies had been required from Jugoslavia in the past to tide over bad crops. Not merely were such shipments as now arrived at Durazzo and Valona in Soviet bottoms quite insufficient to fill similar needs but a good part of them were consigned to the Greek guerrillas. The war in Greece was not going well, and the strain of keeping up a good face about it was increased by the fact that the wounded and refugees who sought shelter in Albania were, of course, Greeks—Communist Greeks, yes, but not disliked much less on that account by the Albanians who had to look after them. Worst of all, Tito was not simply holding his own at home, he was counterattacking abroad with propaganda for the independence of all Communist governments and parties. Hoxha

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia
Albania [illegible]

648 wondered whether this might not appeal to certain of his followers who had been indoctrinated originally by Jugoslav instructors or who had joined the Party for national even more than social objectives. Many younger members in particular had taken to Communism as a *pis aller* when all other methods of protesting against the extinction of Albanian independence seemed to be blocked.

The Russian stake in Albania was too great for the Kremlin to risk letting her slip over into the Tito camp. For a second member of the Communist family—even the least and meanest—to go whoring after false gods would be intolerable. Furthermore, in this period the Party line still described Tito as an isolated megalomaniac. If even a minor figure like Hoxha joined him it would signify that he was the head of something like an international movement.

But more than face was at stake. This pinpoint of barren land, malarial swamps and snow-capped mountains could be serviceable in the over-all strategy of even a colossus like Russia. Whenever Tito decided to close the Greek-Jugoslav frontier—which it became certain he would do eventually, once the Greek Communist Party had accepted the Cominform line[4]—Albania would offer the only remaining road for Soviet supplies to reach the Communist bands operating in northwest Greece; while if the Greek war had to be liquidated the only refuge for the guerrillas would be in Albania.

The value of Albania in Soviet strategy also extends far outside the Balkans. In the event of war with the West the Russians would find submarine bases beyond the Turkish-controlled Dardanelles immensely valuable. They had shown that they were aware of this immediately after the war, when engineers of the Soviet mission took over the Italian naval station on the island of Saseno, off the port of Valona. Soviet submarines based on Saseno, which commands the Strait of Otranto and is only 50 miles from the Italian coast, would close off the Adriatic from the main body of Mediterranean waters. This meant that so long as Jugoslavia belonged to the Cominform bloc, Soviet and Jugoslav craft operating from the Jugoslav harbors of Kotor and Split would be free to attack Bari, Ancona and other

---

[4] The Greek-Jugoslav frontier was closed formally by the Jugoslav Government July 23, 1949, but had been closed in fact some time earlier (*cf.* Chapter XVI).

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia
Albania EG1

Italian shipping centers, also Foggia, reputed to be a prospective 648 bombing base for long-range American operations against the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the eastern and central Mediterranean basin and much of North Africa, more important than ever in the latest British and American strategy, would be within bombing radius of Jugoslav and Albanian airfields. Tito's withdrawal from the Soviet camp made it necessary to rely solely on Albanian bases for carrying these plans into execution. Without Saseno and the Albanian airfields (of which there were about ten by latest report, half of them developed to the point where they could serve heavy planes), Soviet submarines would be barred from the Mediterranean and Soviet bombers would be pushed back to the Danube valley. We of course have no direct information about the extent of recent Soviet activity on Saseno. However, foreign intelligence services in contact with underground elements inside Albania believe that although newspaper stories about elaborate concrete submarine pens are exaggerated the scale of fortifications makes Saseno a formidable threat to naval movements in the Mediterranean in time of war as well as to military installations in Italy and North Africa.

With such valuable eggs in its little Albanian basket[1] the Kremlin 665 naturally ordered Prime Minister Hoxha to show the utmost dili- 186 gence in rooting out any dangerous nationalist sentiments that might appear in the Albanian Communist Party. There had been a nationalist movement of some promise in Albania during the war, but its leaders had lost standing for various reasons—some because they collaborated with the Communists, some because they collaborated with the Nazis when the latter replaced the Italians after the Italian capitulation, some because American and British propaganda tended to favor the Albanian Communists as a way of helping the Jugoslav Partisans, especially after the Allied landing in Italy made it seem possible that Churchill might succeed in having an Allied expedition sent into the Balkans. When Hoxha set up his government in Tirana 665 in November 1944 he maintained the appearance of collaboration 642 with such non-Communist resistance elements as still existed and were willing to join the new "Democratic Front," the organization which now replaced the openly Communist "National Liberation Front" of the war years. But the need for concessions to patriotic

[1] [i.e. Russian political and strategic interests; see cat. 116, pp. 228-229. --- Analyst]

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia
Albania E61

665- 642 nationalist and democratic forces in the country diminished as the Communist Party tightened its hold; and following the one-ticket elections of December 2, 1945, it came to an end. The monarchy was abolished in fact as well as in name, the People's Democratic Republic of Albania was proclaimed and the non-Communists who had been collaborating with Hoxha fled abroad or were shot. There followed the agrarian "reforms," the nationalization (confiscation) of such small industry as existed in the country, the elimination of independent shopkeepers and the other measures which so much pleased the Soviet commentator quoted earlier.

186 648 Among the strongest incentives to Albanian nationalistic feeling are Albania's claim to the Kossovo area in Jugoslavia, where there is an Albanian minority, and Greece's claim to the Northern Epirus district in southern Albania, where there is a Greek minority. Propaganda in favor of one annexation and counter-propaganda against the other are the habitual stock-in-trade of Albanian patriots.

148 Italy annexed Kossovo to Albania in 1941—one of Mussolini's cheap rewards for the Nazi victory in Jugoslavia. The action strengthened the Jugoslav resistance, notably on the part of the Serb Chetniks, for the Kossovo plain holds a special place in Serb history and in the hearts of Serb patriots. In the end the district went back to Jugoslavia, after the Italians and later the Germans had been expelled. One of the returns which Hoxha had to make for Tito's material and moral support was to put an end to the former annexationist propaganda in that direction.

Developments on the other front were more favorable to Hoxha. Britain always had been a friend and protector of Greece, from imperial interest as well as Byronic sentiment, and the United States had taken over a share in that rôle under the Truman Doctrine. Hoxha could point to the fact that the two Western Powers were hostile to the Greek Communists as well as to his own Communist régime, whereas the Soviet Union was friendly to both; and on this basis he could argue that if the Greek Royal Government won it would have British and perhaps American support in claiming Northern Epirus, whereas if the Greek Communists won they would be instructed by the Soviet Government to withdraw any claim on another Communist country's territory. On balance, Communism

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia
Albania EG1

did not come out badly as a defender of Albanian interests, for the 648 lands in jeopardy in the south constitute nearly a quarter of the entire territory of Albania and are much more important to the country's existence than the territory claimed from Jugoslavia. Recently, with Communist fortunes at a low ebb in Greece and with Jugoslav-Albanian relations as bad as possible, the situation has been reversed. Hoxha can still claim, however, that a Communist victory all around is the only guarantee of a safe solution of the quarrel with Greece, and he also is now free to attack the treatment received by the Albanians in Kossovo and to say that if only there were a "true" Communist régime in Belgrade it would do them favors which a "false" comrade like Tito refused.

Basically, however, Hoxha felt insecure, and not only for the reasons 000 mentioned a few paragraphs back. He must constantly have wondered how he himself stood in the Kremlin. What was the Soviet estimate of his own fidelity? He had been Tito's friend, had protested countless times how much he loved him, how he would fight to the death for him. What could he do to demonstrate that he, Hoxha, who had gone back so easily on one ally, would remain faithful to the next?

Hoxha's second-in-command was Lieutenant General Koci Xoxe 665 (pronounced Dzodze), Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, 661 organizing secretary of the Communist Party, an able theoretician and adept also at ruthless action. Like Hoxha he had been Tito's close collaborator, but he had not hesitated a fraction of a second longer than his chief in announcing his switch to the anti-Tito camp, and he vied with Hoxha in denouncing their old ally's ideological errors and political perfidy and in lauding Stalin as the fount of Communist wisdom and the Soviet Union as Albania's only protector. During the summer of 1948 as Minister of the Interior he conducted the purge of Titoist suspects in the government and Party.

What more convincing proof of his own fidelity could Hoxha offer Stalin than to be willing to sacrifice even this outstanding friend and colleague? To denounce Xoxe would be almost like denouncing himself, but preferable. He called the Central Committee of the Party to meet in Berat in September, and after it had listened to his account of how Xoxe, who had been purging Titoists, was himself a

-7

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1

were sold in the markets of Belgrade and in the profiteers' shops at a hundred times the price paid for them.[*] 000

A 648
Y 648

For some months after Xoxe's death the Jugoslav Government took much abuse from the Albanian Government and press (though not without returning it), and accepted many rebuffs, probably on the theory that nationalist elements still existed in the Albanian Communist Party and might at any time stage an anti-Cominform coup. With some outside help a revolt might indeed have been precipitated. However, the risk that it might end up an anti-Communist revolution rather than a pro-Tito one deterred the Jugoslavs from giving indiscriminate help to anti-Hoxha elements, while the Western Powers were afraid that any incident in the Balkans might provide an excuse for Soviet intervention, particularly while the Greek civil war was still in progress. Italy, Albania's nearest influential neighbor to the west, was not at all anxious to see the Albanian question reopened, with the possibility that the country might be divided between Jugoslavia and Greece. As pointed out to me by Count Sforza in the spring of 1950 (when there were rumors that a concerted effort might be made to overthrow Hoxha), Italian interests are safer with a small nation rather than a large or middle-sized one occupying the opposite coast of the Strait of Otranto. He added: "Besides our political reasons for wishing Albania to remain united and independent we have a moral one. I always opposed the idea of making the Albanians into Italians by force. Any government in which I am Foreign Minister will oppose making them into Jugoslavs and Greeks."

Hoxha thus remained in office. Whether he was still Number 1 or had become a figurehead under Mehmet Shehu—or whether, as some say, Shehu had himself been liquidated at Moscow's orders—is not established. But although the chance of a successful revolt in Albania seemed to recede, the danger of an Albanian-Greek clash remained. The retreat of the Greek guerrillas into Northern Epirus provided many chances for incidents and there was even some fear lest the Soviets might instruct the Greek Communists to try if possible to

---

[*] "Albania: From a Writer's Travel Diary," by Arkadi Perventsev, in *New Times*, Moscow, November 23, 1949.

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania E61

A 648
Y 648

tempt the Government forces to pursue them across the Albanian frontier. A Greek invasion of Albania would place the Jugoslav Government in a dilemma—whether to support the Cominform enemy against the Greek "Monarcho-Fascists," or to renege and incur criticism as a secret ally of reaction? Tito feared that the Soviets might put him on this spot and use whatever action he took as a pretext for intervening themselves. Events elsewhere gave color to the idea that Moscow might be planning a coup. The autumn of 1949 saw the beginning of the great Budapest trial at which the Hungarian Government accused Laszlo Rajk, former Minister of the Interior, of plotting with Tito to overthrow the régime. In Belgrade, Mosha Pijade asserted that the Soviets were seeking an excuse for armed action against Jugoslavia. If they were unable to make the Rajk trial serve their purpose, he said, they would foment a Greek-Albanian war, accuse Tito of being in secret alliance with Athens and either go to Hoxha's assistance themselves against both Jugoslavia and Greece or send their satellite armies.

Tito's position was legally a complicated one, for in spite of everything that had happened the Jugoslav-Albanian pact of mutual assistance was still in force. Tito had so far avoided taking the initiative in abrogating an agreement with any of his former Cominform allies. The other six members of the Soviet bloc had one after another denounced their treaties with Jugoslavia. Albania only had held back, in order not to release Tito from his uncomfortable position. At last Tito felt that the risk of having to carry out his treaty obligations to Albania or of being accused of aiding and abetting the Athens Government and its Western backers was intolerable. On November 12, 1949, it was announced in Belgrade that the Albanian treaty had been cancelled.

The picture of Jugoslav-Albanian relations given by the Jugoslav note was the contrary, of course, of that painted by the *New Times* of Moscow in the excerpt quoted above, but rather recalled what the correspondent of *The Worker* and various Soviet reporters had been accustomed to write in the days before it occurred to anybody to deny Tito's benevolence toward Hoxha. According to the Belgrade story there was no phase of Albanian life which did not owe a debt to Jugoslav generosity. In 1946 the Jugoslav Government had sent

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania E61

A 648 Y 648

Albania 20,000 tons of wheat "without demand for any form of payment;" in 1947 it had granted 2,000 million dinars for Albanian development, a sum which "amounted to over half of the total Albanian budget;" and in 1948 it had made a new grant of 3,000 million dinars, which like the grant of the year before carried no conditions as to repayment. Thanks to these grants Albania had obtained Jugoslav locomotives, cars, trucks, ships and agricultural machines. When in addition she asked for an automatic telephone exchange for Tirana, a printing plant and a radio station, she had received them as outright gifts. She also had requested and received the loan of Jugoslav experts and workers in various fields, besides Jugoslav military instructors and teachers for her schools; and she had sent over 1,500 Albanian pupils to study in Jugoslavia on Jugoslav scholarships. This and much more the Jugoslavs had done, said the Jugoslav note, to give practical application to "the principle of true Socialist aid to a backward country, aid free of all exploitation, not conditioned by political concessions." It added: "For the first time a new Socialist form of economic coöperation came into being in the relations between two Socialist countries, that is to say, a coöperation freed of the capitalist features of the economically weaker being exploited by the economically stronger." Bukharin himself could not have argued the merits of the case more convincingly.

Heaping coals of fire on Hoxha's head, the Jugoslav note quoted expressions of everlasting gratitude and friendship voiced by Hoxha on the basis of all this support from "the brotherly peoples of Marshal Tito's Jugoslavia." Why, it inquired, had that gratitude failed and that friendship ceased? The answer was that Hoxha had allowed himself to become the tool of the very persons who wished to "eradicate" the Jugoslav-Albanian example of true Socialist coöperation. Those persons, *i.e.* the men in the Kremlin, were afraid of the impression caused by that coöperation, found it "hateful" and had determined not to permit it to continue.

Y 648

Almost automatically, the man whom Hoxha had executed as an alleged tool of Jugoslavia, personifying nationalist and anti-Soviet errors, became in Belgrade eyes a true hero, a martyr to his determination to preserve Albanian national rights and combat Stalinist

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia

Albania EG1

291
286
531

No. 1935-68. One of a pair of leggings for a Zadrima woman is illustrated at "E" on Plate X. The foundation is of knitting done in coarse wool, the foot portion striped in yellow and green, two stitches of each colour alternately, and the top portion in the design indicated at "E", in red and black.

The part below the latter is covered as far down as the ankle with red felt upon which braided patterns in scarlet, yellow and white are sewn down, and five rows of fine stitchery taken right through the knitting divide each set of motives.

The outer side of the legging is the part that has been drawn. On the inner side is a plainer panel, divided for the whole length of the felt, finished off with a felt flap, and both sides of the division hooked together with strong brass hooks and eyes. This arrangement ensures a well-fitted legging which is warm, comfortable and decorative. Over the knitted foot part a leather "opanga" would be worn.

[177] "Similar leggings, with local differences of pattern and colour, were formerly worn in many districts. This was the only pair I was able to obtain." (M.E.D.).

CHAPTER XIII.

Women's Jeleks.

In addition to the jelek on Plate X worn by a Zadrima woman, there are five others from Albania in the collection.

These little sleeveless jackets or zouaves are worn by both women and men in many districts and are usually beautifully decorated, chiefly by braiding, which is done by Albanian tailors. Amongst those not yet described is one of outstanding workmanship and design, that presented to Miss Durham by the Beys forming the provisional government of Berat in July, 1913, in token of gratitude. She says, "Korcha was occupied by Greek troops in the Balkan war of 1912-13, and the Greeks claimed it. Along with Mr. H. W. Nevinson (the famous war correspondent), I rode three days over the mountains, arriving at Berat early in the morning, and drafted a telegram to the Council of Ambassadors in London as a petition from the inhabitants of Korcha saying they wished to remain Albanian, and Korcha remains Albanian to this day as a result of that desperate ride."

[721
648]

No. 1937-19. This jelek, which has a foundation of black face cloth, either Austrian or Italian in origin, is entirely covered with gold embroidery, both raised and flat, in which expert use is made of gold thread or passing, gold cord, purl and sequins.

The design on the front, of conventional eight and four-petalled flowers connected by graceful curves and mingled with raised geometrical forms, is so elaborate that a reduced drawing of it would be unsatisfactory, but a small portion of one corner of actual size is reproduced in Fig. 7b, which also shows the four rows of plaited gold passing divided by three rows of gold cord which border the whole garment.

The back has a large bi-symmetrical motive which fills most of the space, and is bordered by the same design that almost encircles the armhole. A part of this border from near the lower edge at the back is given on Fig. 7a. The little added flaps at the front, usually found on jeleks, are absent from this specimen, being re-